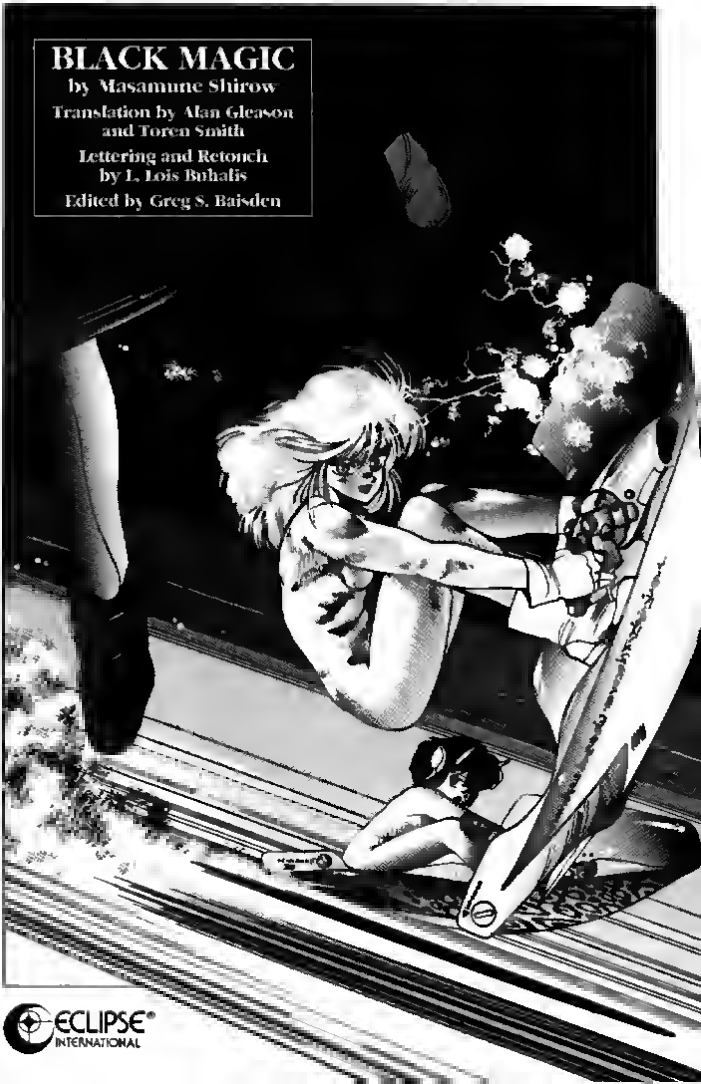
ECLIPSE INTERNATIONAL

Masamune Shirow's
seminal first work

BLACK Magic

Book One of Four

STUDIO PROTEUS


BLACK MAGIC
by Masamune Shirow
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ECLIPSE®
INTERNATIONAL

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In this English edition of *Black Magic*, the artwork has been reversed
to read left-to-right for the American audience.

PROLOGUE

WHEN IT BEGAN, AND WHEN IT ENDED, IS SOMETHING KNOWN ONLY TO THOSE WHO WERE THERE.

WHAT IS KNOWN IS THAT THE HUMAN CIVILIZATION ON VENUS EVENTUALLY COMPLETED THE MAMMOTH SUPERCOMPUTER, NEMESIS.

THE NEMESIS SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED TO TAKE IN HAND ALL THE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS OF THE VENUSIAN FEDERATION. ITS MISSION: BRING ABOUT UTOPIA.

NEMESIS

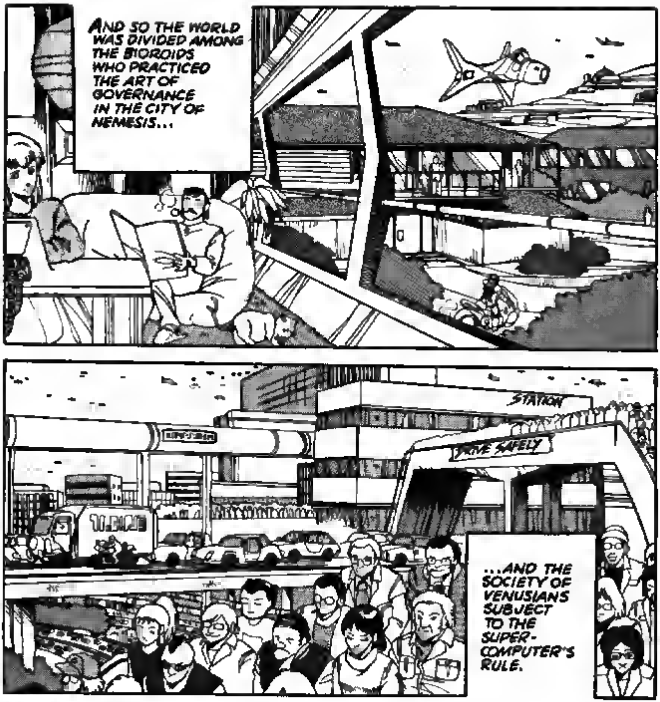
UPON COMPLETION OF NEMESIS, THE ENTIRE PLANET SURRENDERED ITSELF TO THE CONTROL OF THE ULTIMATE BENEVOLENT DICTATOR.

NEMESIS

BUT, NEMESIS NEEDED AGENTS TO DEFEND ITS COMPUTERIZED ADMINISTRATION AND EXECUTE ITS ORDERS. THE AGENTS WERE CALLED, SOMEWHAT OMINOUSLY, EXECUTORS.

THUS, EACH REGION WAS ASSIGNED ITS OWN EXECUTORS.. BIOROIDS GENERATED THROUGH GENETIC MANIPULATION, RECIPIENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FROM BIRTH.

AND NEMESIS BUILT A GREAT CITY WHERE THE EXECUTORS MIGHT LIVE.


AND SO THE WORLD WAS DIVIDED AMONG THE BIOROIDS WHO PRACTICED THE ART OF GOVERNANCE IN THE CITY OF NEMESIS...
STATION
DRIVE SAFELY
...AND THE SOCIETY OF VENUSIANS SUBJECT TO THE SUPER-COMPUTER'S RULE.

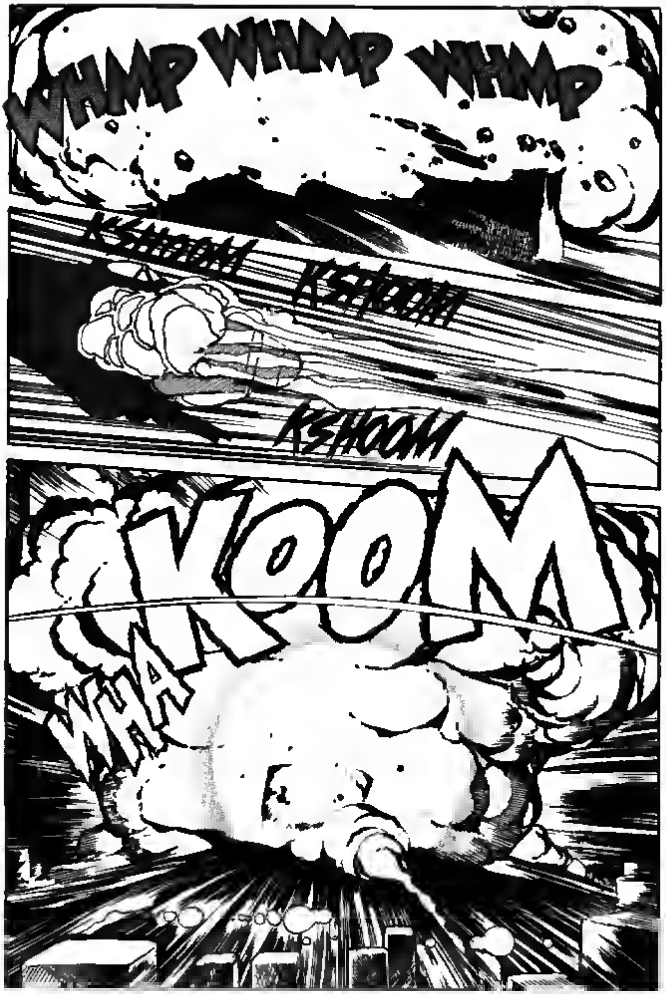
NEMESIS CREATED ANOTHER SELF-AWARE COMPUTER, **TANTALOS**, ENTRUSTING IT WITH THE TRAINING OF THE BIOROIDS, AND IT CONSTRUCTED ITS OWN MOBILE ROBOT TERMINAL, **URANUS**. IN TIME, CHRONOS--THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF THE BIOROIDS BUILT BY THE PERFECTIONIST URANUS--TOOK OVER THE REINS OF POWER FROM NEMESIS, AND TRUE GOVERNMENT BEGAN. ABOUT THE TIME LEGAL RESTRICTIONS WERE TIGHTENED ON THE SIZE OF THE BIOROID POPULATION, **ZEUS** WAS CREATED AND DEFEATED CHRONOS IN A FIERCELY CONTESTED ELECTION. EVENTUALLY, THE GENERATION OF NEW BIOROIDS WAS PROHIBITED, BUT NEMESIS REMAINED WARY LEST THE GOVERNMENT BECOME TOO STRONG. IN GREATEST SECRECY, IT WORKED WITH TANTALOS TO CREATE **TYPHON**. ZEUS LEARNED OF TYPHON JUST AFTER HER BIRTH, AND DESTROYED HER IN A SAVAGE BATTLE IN THE ETONA MOUNTAINS. BUT NEMESIS ONCE AGAIN GENERATED THE TYPHON PROGRAM AND, CONCEALING HER FROM THE EYES OF ZEUS, RAISED HER IN THE WORLD OF MAN.

TEOTIHUACAN CITY.
...AND ME A MAGIC DEMON WARRIOR!
SAY WHAT?
I'M SAYING I CAN DO MIND SHOTS, TOO! WHY DON'T THEY JUST LET ME KILL HER FROM HERE?
HAW. HAW. HAW!
YOUR MIND SHOTS WOULDN'T EVEN FAZE HER.

LOOK, WE'RE ALL LICENCED A-CLASS FEDERAL POLICE! THIS WHOLE CHARADE'S A DAMN INSULT!
HAW!
IT'S THE TARGET'S FAULT. SHE'S JUST TOO DANGEROUS. IF WE SCREW UP AND SHE GETS AWAY, THEN YOU CAN USE YOUR MAGIC ALL YOU WANT.
IS SHE REALLY THAT TOUGH?
DREADNAUGHT CLASS. THE STRONGEST SORCERESS ON THE PLANET, I WAGER.
A RESERVE EXECUTOR..?!
SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE END OF THE LINE - THE LAST DIRECT DESCENDANT OF NEMESIS.
HEY, HEY.. NEMESIS WAS CREATED TO BUILD POLITICIANS, RIGHT?
AND THERE AIN'T NO END TO THOSE GUYS! HAW!
ENTERING COMBAT ZONE NOW!
I FIGURE NEMESIS IS CHECKING OUT OF THIS POLITICAL SYSTEM.
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO WASTE HER?
ORDERS ARE ORDERS.

Mmm.....
.....
Mmph.
ZZZZ
SHE'S SLEEPING, DAMN IT! I COULD TAKE HER OUT WITH ONE GOOD—
WHOT!
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAST GUY!
DON'T EVER TREAT HER LIKE A NORMAL!
EVEN ASLEEP?!
THAT ROOM'S WRAPPED IN SPELLS-- EVEN THE GARBAGE CAN WOULD FIGHT FOR HER!

Oh, WHAT THE HELL. IT'S ALL THE SAME...
..A COUPLE OF MICROWARP SHELLS WILL PUT HER OUT. ANY OBJECTIONS ?
Heh
FIRST ROUND LOADED. FIRE WHEN READY. FIRE WHEN READY
KSHOOM
KSHOOM
KSHOOM
zz
Mph
WHKOOM


WHMP WHMP WHMP
KSHOOM KSHOOM
KSHOOM
WHA KOOM

WHAT DO YOU THINK? MORE?
HOLD IT..

:Phew!:

SHIT! WE SCREWED IT! GET US OUT OF HERE!
SHAKE HER OFF! FULL POWER!
YOU! USE YOUR MAGIC TO GIVE US A SCREEN!
?!

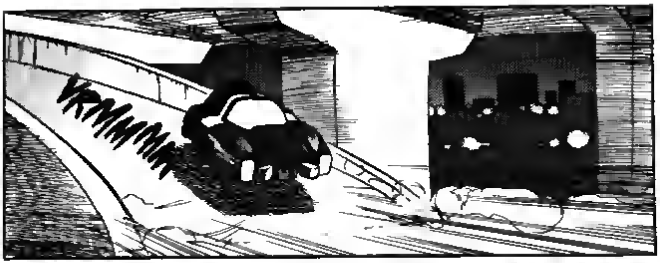
. . . . .
. . . . .
VEEE!
Mmph...
YAWN
HOLY... YOU MEAN WE REALLY DIDN'T FAZE HER?
IDIOT! STOP BABBLING AND HELP US GET AWAY!
ONCE WE'RE IN ORBIT, HEAD STRAIGHT FOR DARKSIDE.
HURRY!

KRASH
APA!
HGHH..
.....
WE'RE JUST... ZEUS... AAARGH!
HWWNG!
...?!

EEYAA!
BOMF
AUTO DESTRUCT ...?
A LOYAL SERVANT ...
AARG NO...!
I... Huh?
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT. NOW.
LEAVE HER!
AGENTS OF ZEUS, THE CHIEF EXECUTOR..?
COLD OUT...
SO COLD...

WHMP
HNNG
OWWW...
THAT HURT, DAMMIT!
SO NOW WHAT? WE JUST GO BACK TO BASE?
WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?
I'D HEARD RUMORS, BUT...
.. SHE'S GOT A HELL OF A LOT MORE POWER THAN I FIGURED!
SHIT...
NOTHIN' WE CAN DO... JUST FILE A REPORT
HONK
HONK
HONK
SKREEE

!
GET OUT OF THE ROAD, YOU IDIOTS!
YOU WANT TO GET KILLED ?!
SHE DROPPED US ON A HIGHWAY?!
KUAK
VRMMMM
GYAAA!
OWW OWW OWWWW!
VRRMMMM


VRMMMMM

ZEUS' PRIVATE TROOPS. eh.. Hmmm.
I BETTER REPORT THIS TO NEMESIS.

WHA--?
...
...
INIMAL

WHY?ME? YOU SHUN UVVA BITCH!!
PLEASE, SIR! DON'T--
HEY, YOU!

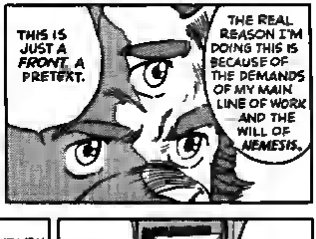
DADDY!
BOSS!
THEY TALK?

WHO IN'HELL'E THEY? YOU, YA--

WHOK

FWOO
BUT DADDY! HE WAS A CUSTOMER!
CUSTOMERS LIKE HIM, WE DON'T NEED. BESIDES, I'M CLOSING EARLY
BUT BUT BOSS—IT'S ONLY SEVEN O'CLOCK!
I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS.
GET EVERYONE TO MY PLACE AND WAIT FOR ME THERE.
IT'S IMPORTANT, SO DO IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE
ALL RIGHT, THEN.

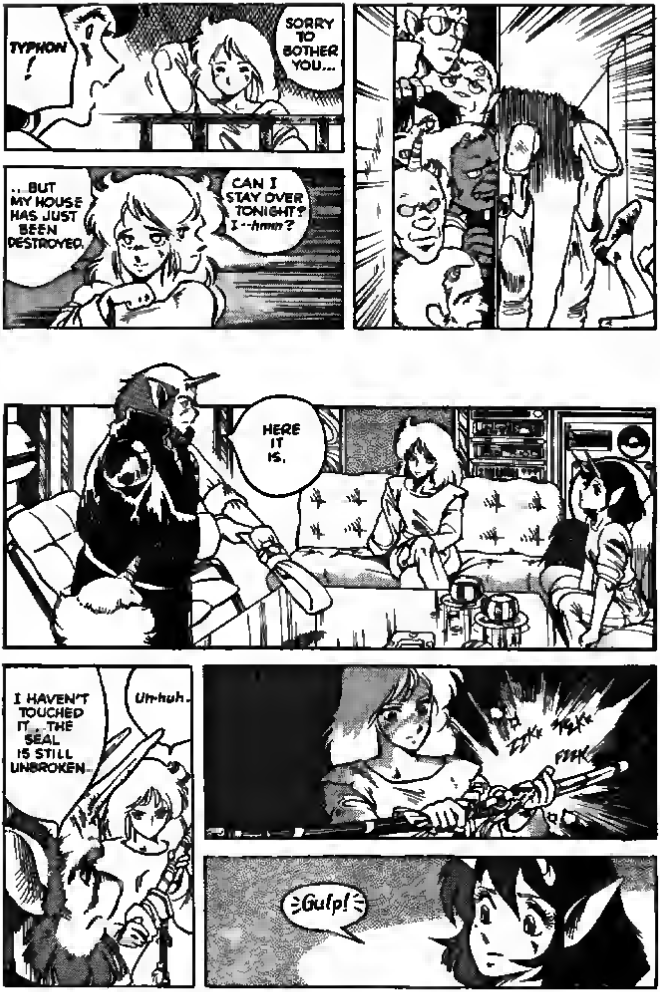
FORGET IT THE RESTAURANT *OWIMAL* SUFFERS FROM A SERIOUS SLUMP IN BUSINESS. IT WILL GO BANKRUPT, AND ITS EMPLOYEES WILL SCATTER TO THE FOUR WINDS.
WHAAAT?!


THIS IS JUST A *FRONT*. A PRETEXT.
THE REAL REASON I'M DOING THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE DEMANDS OF MY MAIN LINE OF WORK AND THE WILL OF *NEMESIS*.

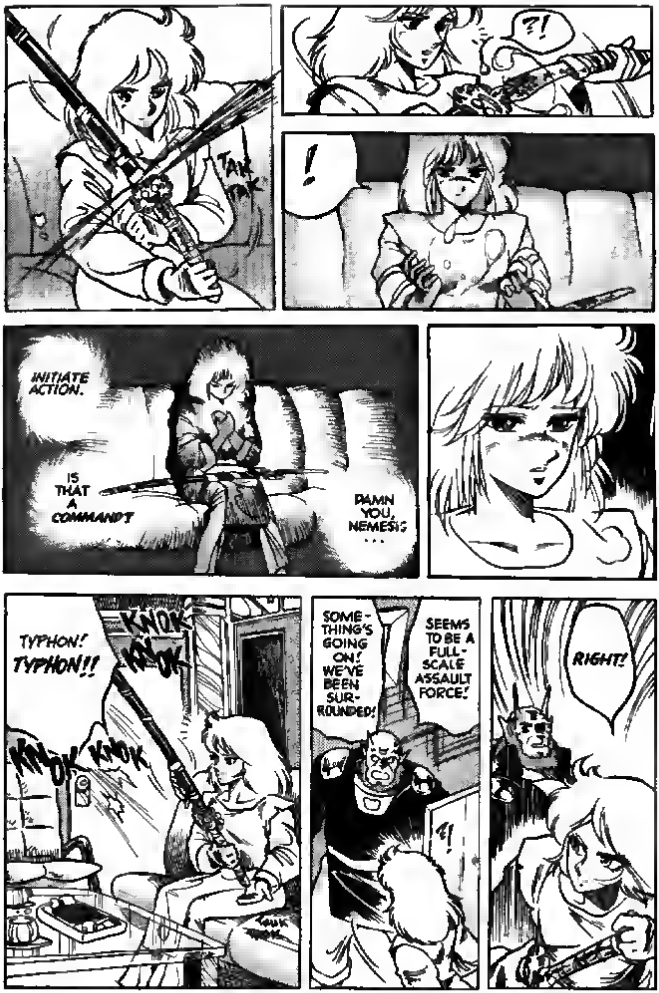
THAT GROUP OF NOMADS THAT PEDDLES STUFF THEY CLAIM IS *AMBROSIA** AND *NECTAR*+?
YES. WE WILL ALL JOIN THEM-- SEPARATELY OF COURSE-- AND RUN A BRANCH STORE.

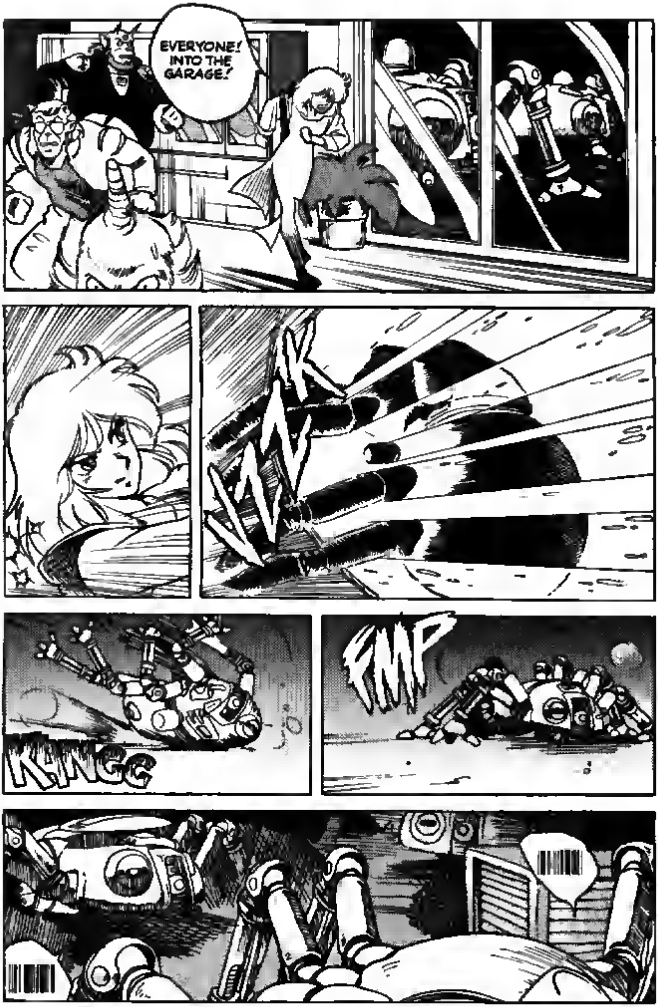
*FOOD BESTOWING IMMORTALITY
+THE WINE OF THE GODS

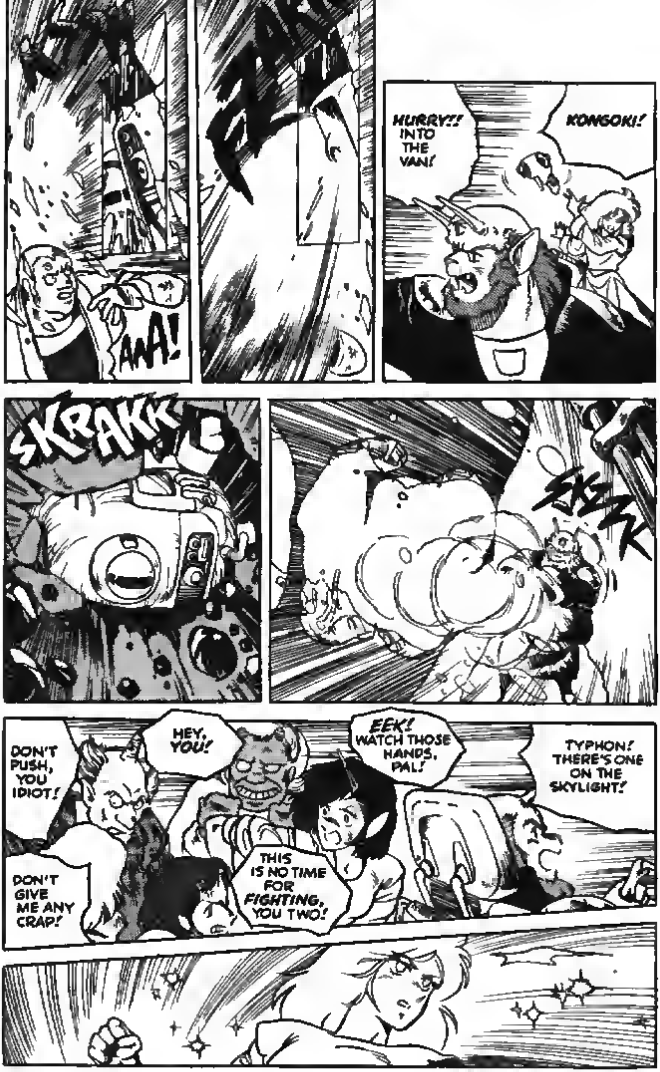
EVER HEAR OF DUNA TYPHON?
Y-YES... SHE'S THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF NEMESIS.
THEY SAY SHE'S A SORCERESS WHOSE POWER MATCHES FIVE DIVISIONS OF THE INTERPLANETARY FORCES, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
DOES THIS INVOLVE HER?
YES.
WHEN TYPHON WAS BORN, NEMESIS GAVE ME A SWORD FOR SAFEKEEPING.
I WAS TOLD TO HAND THE SWORD OVER TO HER TODAY AND LEAVE TEOTI-HUACAN.
HELLO? ANYONE HOME?
!
IS YASHA HOME? CAN I COME IN?

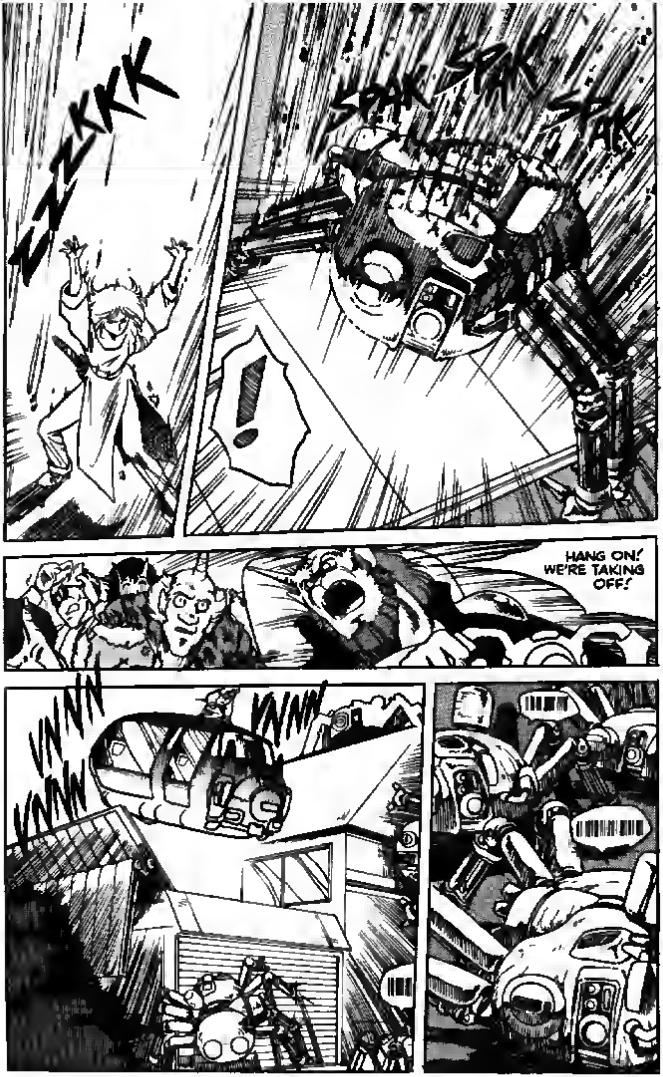

TYPHON!
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
..BUT MY HOUSE HAS JUST BEEN DESTROYED.
CAN I STAY OVER TONIGHT? I--hmm?
HERE IT IS.
I HAVEN'T TOUCHED IT.. THE SEAL IS STILL UNBROKEN.
Um-huh.
FISH
FISH
:Gulp!:

CHAK
WHAT TH-?!
ARE YOUR EYES ALL RIGHT?
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NO... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE THE HILT.
EXCUSE ME, BUT COULD EVERYONE LEAVE THE ROOM, PLEASE?
MY APOLOGIES.
THANKS.

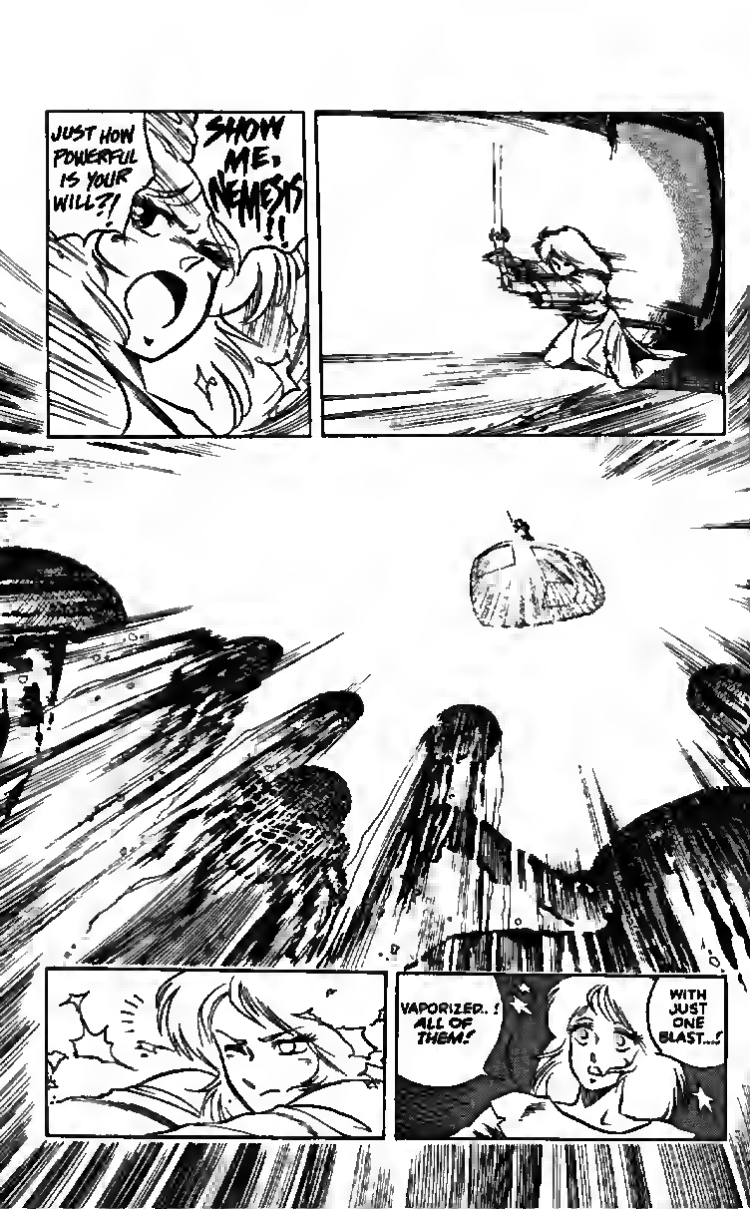

TAK
TAK
?!
!
INITIATE ACTION.
IS THAT A COMMAND?
DAMN YOU, NEMESIS...
TYPHON! TYPHON!!
KNOK
KNOK
KNOK
KNOK
KNOK
SOMETHING'S GOING ON! WE'VE BEEN SURROUNDED!
SEEMS TO BE A FULL-SCALE ASSAULT FORCE!
4!
RIGHT!


EVERYONE! INTO THE GARAGE!
KLANG
FMP


AAA!
HURRY!! INTO THE VAN!
KONGOKI!
SKRAKK
SKZZK
DON'T PUSH, YOU IDIOT!
HEY, YOU!
EEK! WATCH THOSE HANDS, PAL!
TYPHON! THERE'S ONE ON THE SKYLIGHT!
DON'T GIVE ME ANY CRAP!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR FIGHTING, YOU TWO!


ZZZKKK
SPAK SPAK SPAK
!
HANG ON! WE'RE TAKING OFF!
VVNN
VVNN
VVNNN

KSHANG
KSHANG


JUST HOW POWERFUL IS YOUR WILL?!
SHOW ME, NEMESIS!!
VAPORIZED..! ALL OF THEM!
WITH JUST ONE BLAST...!

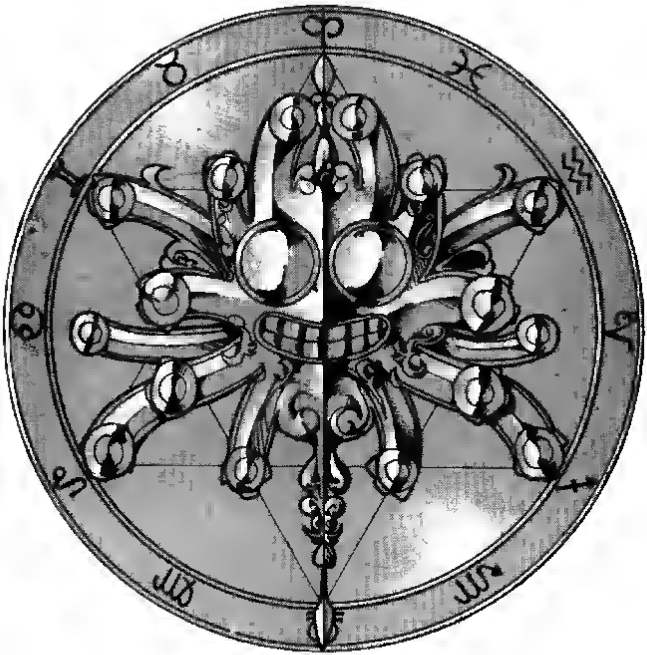
OH, YEAH?! WELL, I'M STILL THE CHIEF!
SO? WHO CARES?!
WHO CUT THE CHEESE?!
GACK!
KONGOKI ...
I KNOW... I KNOW! WE'LL HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE CARAVAN.
I CAN BUILD ANOTHER HOUSE LATER. RIGHT NOW...
...WE'RE JUST LUCKY TO BE ALIVE.
I'M SORRY...
FORGET IT. IT'S WHAT NEMESIS WANTED.
THAT'S A MIGHTY POWERFUL TALISMAN* WHY DID NEMESIS GIVE IT TO YOU?
I THINK IT'S HIS WAY OF... COMPLAINING TO ME...
I GUESS.
THE HUMAN RACE IS LIKE AN EGG THAT HAS BUILT ITS OWN SHELL OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE. NEMESIS IS ITS GUARDIAN.
BUT NOW THE EGG HAS GROWN INTO A LIVE CHICK AND IS PECKING AT ITS SHELL FROM WITHIN. NEMESIS MUST PROTECT BOTH CHICK AND SHELL
AND I THINK IT'S STARTING TO MAKE HIM NEUROTIC.

*AN OBJECT INVESTED WITH GREAT POWER, WHICH IT WILL VENT ONLY FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE. WITHOUT A TALISMAN, A SORCERER CAN DRAW ONLY ON HIS PERSONAL POWER.

THE RULERS AND THE RULED SUFFER FROM THE GAP BETWEEN IDEALS AND REALITY.
NEMESIS POSSESSES THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL HUMAN WISDOM, YET ULTIMATELY HE IS JUST A MACHINE.
HE CANNOT TRANSCEND HIS ROLE AS NOTHING MORE THAN A TOOL.
THE SAME GOES FOR ZEUS, THE PRESENT CHIEF EXECUTOR BUT ZEUS HAS EMOTIONS.
AND RECENTLY HE SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED A DISTASTE FOR HUMAN EXISTENCE.
HE HAS BECOME DANGEROUS
THIS SWORD IS IN PERFECT PHASE WITH MY OWN POWER.
AND IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS COME WHEN MY POWER WILL BE NEEDED.
A TALISMAN THAT MANIFESTS THE GREATEST POWER IN THE WORLD, eh... SO THAT'S WHY ZEUS PANICKED AND LAUNCHED AN ATTACK.
WELL, I DIDN'T REALLY EXPECT MY LIFE TO STAY PEACEFUL FOREVER...
HEY, TYPHON... WHAT WERE THOSE SPIDER THINGS BACK THERE?
EEK!
DON'T SNEAK UP ON ME LIKE THAT!
THOSE WERE SERVOBOTS, REMOTE-CONTROLLED MACHINES. THE LATEST THING OUT OF THE CYBERNETICS LABS.
I THINK YOU'LL BE SEEING A LOT MORE OF THEM.

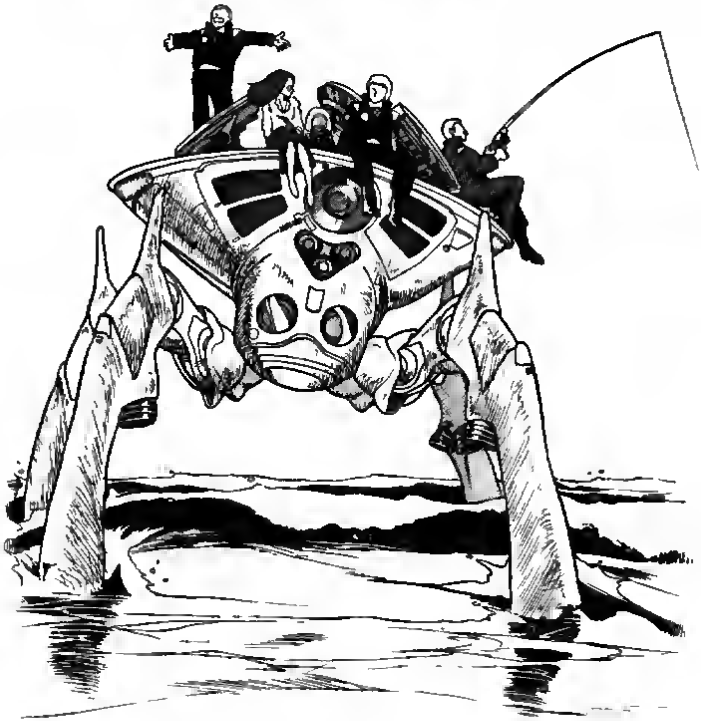
SHOWS HOW SCARED OF YOU ZEUS IS...
?!?
THAT'S A GOOD ATTITUDE FOR HIM TO HAVE. HE SHOULD BE EVEN MORE SCARED THAN HE IS!
ACTUALLY, YASHA .. I BET YOU COULD USE ONE.
A SERVBOT, I MEAN.
YUCK! FORGET IT! THEY LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE SPIDERS!
WHAT IF YOU HAD ONE SHAPED LIKE A HUMAN ...?
Huh?
YOU MEAN THEY HAVE DIFFERENT MODELS?
OCTOPUS MODEL... CAT MODEL ..
HOTDOG MODEL..?
SOUNDS DELI-CIOUS!
THAT REMINDS ME... I'M HUNGRY, DADDY!
YEAH... BE NICE TO HAVE A TASTY-LOOKING SERVOBOT! IF YOU GET MY MEANING..
OH, YEAH! GIMME A SWEET YOUNG THING MODEL!
PERFECT HOUSEWIFE MODEL!
A PLAY-MATE MODEL!
LINGERIE AND FISHNET STOCKINGS MODEL!
BEEF-CAKE MODEL FOR ME!

END: BLACK MAGIC PROLOGUE



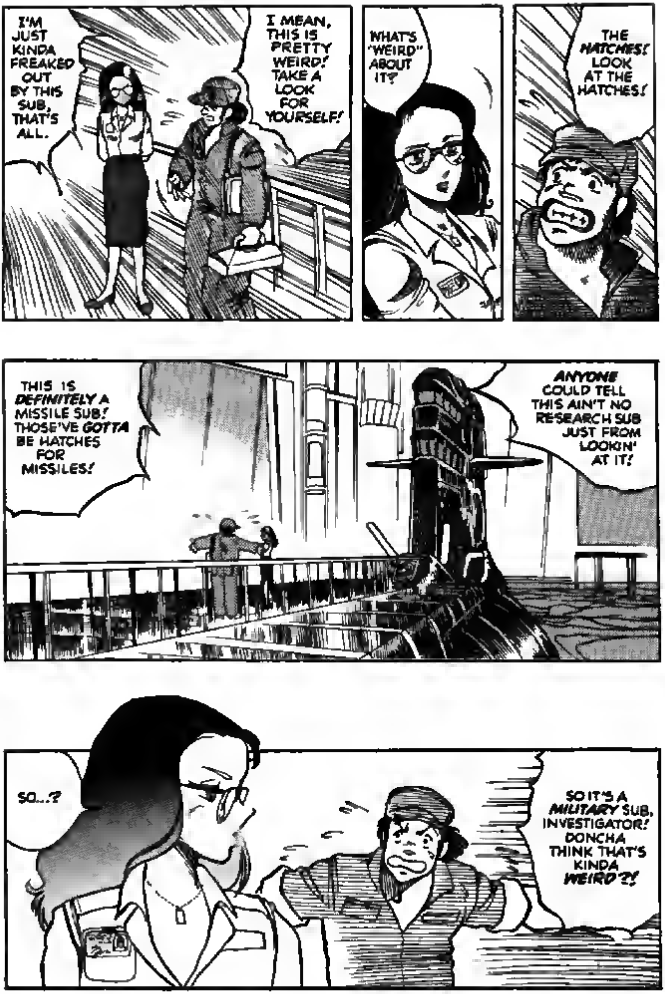
Black Magic Chapter One:

BOWMAN



CENTRAL CAMP: VENUSIAN PROJECT FOR TERRAFORMING THE THIRD PLANET
JEEZ, IT'S HUGE!
I'M SUPPOSTA MAINTAIN THIS ALL BY MYSELF?!
YEAH, IT'S BIG, ALL RIGHT. THEY MUST'VE ASSEMBLED IT AT A SPACE STATION AND BROUGHT IT DOWN BY SHUTTLE.
WONDER WHY THEY DIDN'T JUST BUILD IT HERE?
NOW TH'HELL SHOULD I KNOW?
WELL, THERE MUST BE SOME REASON ANYWAY, SEE THAT YOU DO A GOOD JOB ON IT.
I HEARD THEY'RE GONNA USE THIS AS AN OCEAN FLOOR SURVEY SHP SO WHY'D THEY NEED SOMETHIN' THE SIZE OF A GODDAMN NAVY BATTLESUB, huh?!
THEY THINK WE'RE DUMB OR SOMETHIN'?!
NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT, ANYWAY.
HEY, YOU WANT ME TO TELL THE TOP BRASS HOW MUCH YOU'RE COMPLAINING ...?
WH-WHOA! NO WAY!

MAN, THAT'S NOT EVEN FUNNY.
I DUNNO ABOUT THAT SLIMY BASTARD
JERK...
HUH?!
HEY! WAIT!
GONE ALREADY... SHIT!
HE MUSTA SMELLED WORK OR SOMETHIN' ...
IS ANYTHING WRONG.?
GACK!
J-JEEZ! CHIEF INVESTIGATOR PANDORA! DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT!
HEY..

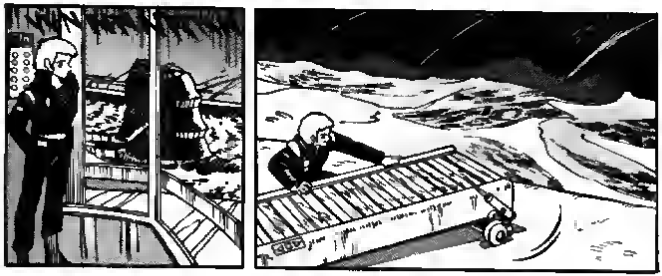

I'M JUST KINDA FREAKED OUT BY THIS SUB, THAT'S ALL.
I MEAN, THIS IS PRETTY WEIRD! TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF!
WHAT'S "WEIRD" ABOUT IT?
THE HATCHES! LOOK AT THE HATCHES!
THIS IS DEFINITELY A MISSILE SUB! THOSE'VE GOTTA BE HATCHES FOR MISSILES!
ANYONE COULD TELL THIS AIN'T NO RESEARCH SUB JUST FROM LOOKIN' AT IT!
SO...?
SO IT'S A MILITARY SUB, INVESTIGATOR! DONCHA THINK THAT'S KINDA WEIRD?!

WELL, IT'S A SHAME, AT ANY RATE.
Huh?! I...
WAIT A SEC! THIS...
THIS AIN'T NO SURPRISE FOR YOU!
EXACTLY. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
KCHAK
N-NO! WAIT!! YOU CAN'T JUST KILL ME!
THEY'LL CATCH YOU! THEY'LL DO ONE'A THOSE BRAINBURNS ON YA!
NO NO NO! NOOOO!!
BLAM
HRNG!!
AAAAAAAA
MY! HOW ACCOMODATING OF HIM!
SUCH A TIDY FELLOW!
I GUESS YOU REALLY CAN TELL AT A GLANCE...
THAT IS A SHAME.

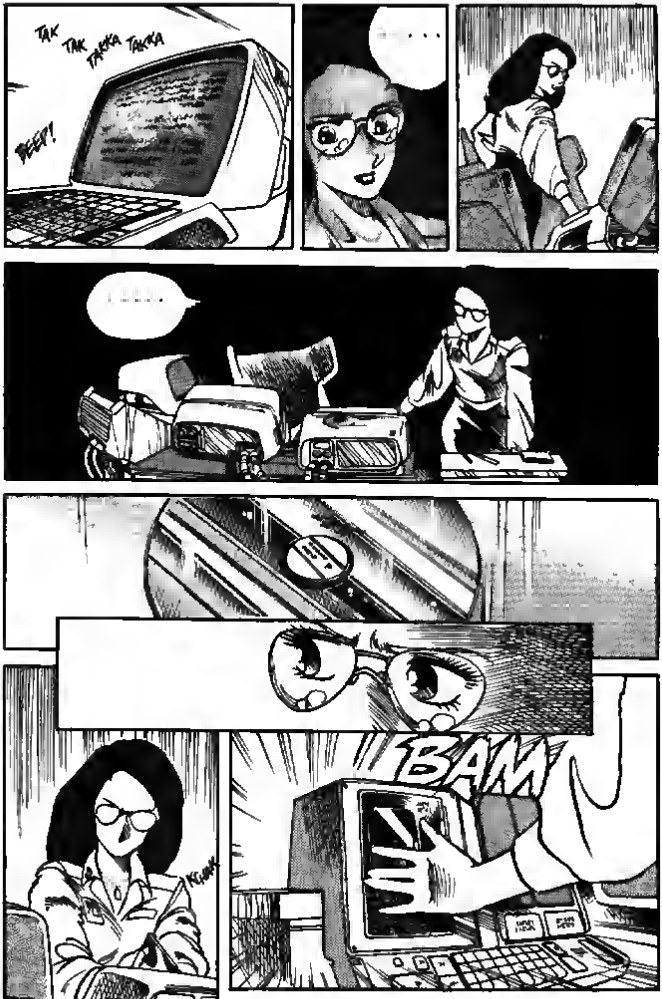
CENTRAL CAMP ASSEMBLY HALL
AT LAST, MY FRIENDS!
ZZZ
ZZZ
AT LONG LAST, WE ARE READY TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE PROMETHEUS PROJECT THAT BEGAN, YEARS AGO, WITH THE ARTIFICIAL SUN! THE LONG-HELD DREAM OF THE VENUSIAN PEOPLE...
...IS ABOUT TO COME TRUE!
ZZZ
THIS PLANET WILL SOON...
BE INHABITABLE BY HUMAN BEINGS!
AS A RESULT...
WE WILL NOT BE SHORT OF LAND OR RESOURCES FOR SOME TIME TO COME!
TO BE BLUNT, THIS LENGTHY PROJECT IS FINALLY ON THE VERGE OF COMPLETION! NO LONGER MUST WE DEVASTATE OUR MOTHER PLANET VENUS FOR THE SAKE OF THE COLONIES!
GNX
WHEN WE-THE INITIAL TERRAFORMING GROUP--PULL OUT, THE FIRST PHASE CONSTRUCTION GROUP WILL ARRIVE!
AS EACH TEAM COMPLETES ITS WORK, IT WILL RETURN TO THE SPACE STATION AND AWAIT A FLIGHT OUT.
LET US NOW RECOUNT THE EARLY DAYS...

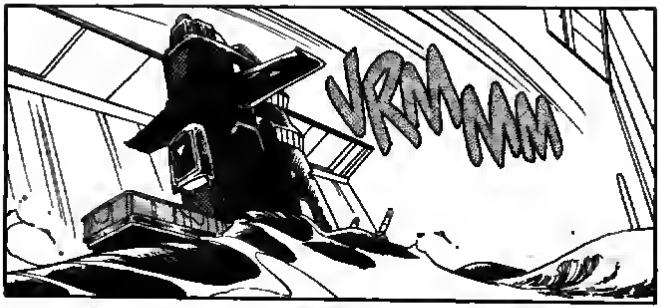
AAAHH... WHAT A RELIEF! MY BRAINS WERE GOING NUMB.
MY SHOULDERS ARE STIFF...
"HARRUMPH! THIS LENGTHY SPEECH IS FINALLY ON THE VERGE OF blah blah blah--!"
HAW, HAW! PRETTY GOOD!
YEAH, NOT BAD SO HOW COME WE INVESTIGATORS HAVE TO LISTEN TO THESE SPEECHES?
HEY, EREBUS! YOU WANNA HEAD OVER TO THE BAR?
Er.. WELL...
ACTUALLY I FIGURED I'D HEAD OVER TO VISIT PANDORA... SORRY!
MY, MY! AREN'T WE DEVOTED! GOOD LUCK!
I THINK SHE'S DOWN AT THE DOCK WHERE THAT SUB ARRIVED TODAY!
GOTCHA! THANKS!
WANNA GO TAKE A LOOK?
.....
OF COURSE!

.....
.....
Hmmm... MAYBE SHE'S ONBOARD ...

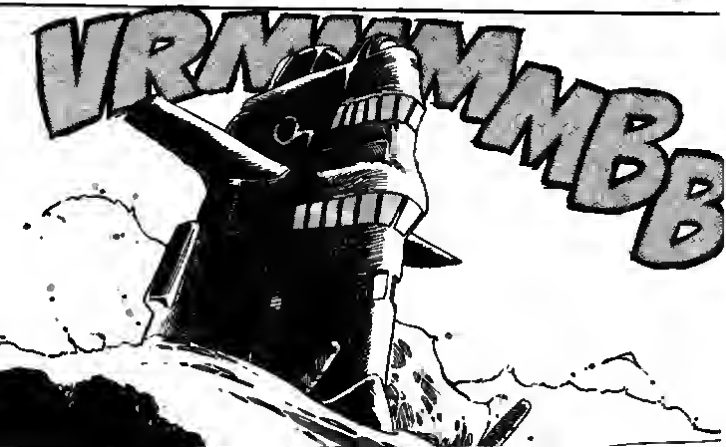


MMMMMMMM
KANG
...?
TAKKA TAK
TAKKA TAKKA BEEP!


TAK
TAK
TAKKA
TAKKA
BEEP!
. . . .
. . . . . .
BAM
KLUNK


VRMMMM

Huh?
WHAT THE HELL'? IT'S MOVING OUT!
THAT'S CRAZY!! WE'RE THE CREW!
SO WHAT'S GOING ON'?
.....


VRMMMMBBB

!
WHOOPS!
KLANK
COME ON!!
Huh? WHERE?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?! I'M GOING AFTER IT!!!
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE FOR THE EPIMETHEUS TO LEAVE WITHOUT US!
I MEAN, IT'S OUR SHIP!

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON, ANYWAY?
SOMEBODY'S TAKEN CONTROL OF THE SUB!
YEAH, BUT WHY?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I INTEND TO FIND OUT!
LET'S GO!
EREBUS IS INSIDE... IF WE CAN REACH HIM, WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S UP
CALL THE GENERAL DIRECTOR!
--AND THEREFORE, WE CAN EXPECT..
EH? SOMEONE'S BEEN SHOT?
WHA-- WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

TAKKA TAK TAKKA TAKKA
?
KAHOOM
FWOOSH
GENERAL COMMAND! THIS IS THE LELA-1! DO YOU READ ME?
THEY'VE LAUNCHED A MISSILE!
I'LL INTER-CEPT THEM!
WAIT!

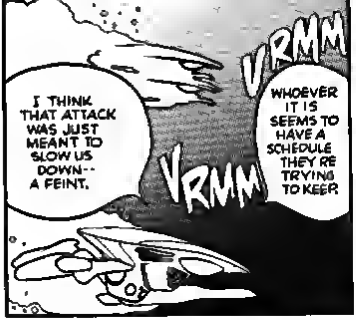
RMB
RMB
RMB
RMB
THEY'VE ACTIVATED THE DEFENSE FIELD!
VRMM
WE CAN'T ATTACK OR COMMUNICATE WITH THEM! RETREAT AT FULL SPEED!
EXECUTE LRF4!
LELA 2! COME IN, LELA 2!
HURRY!
PANG
VRMMMMMM
VRMMMMM

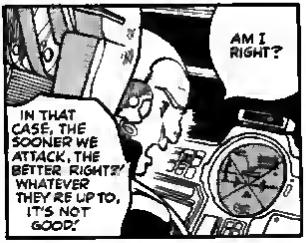
THE EPIMETHEUS IS A MISSILE SUBMARINE ?!
PANDORA WAS RESPONSIBLE!! I HAD NO--
I FIGURED IT OUT! SO SHE SHOT ME!!
A SCHEME BY THE OPPOSITION ...?
SIR! THE EPIMETHEUS AND THREE LELA-CLASS VESSELS HAVE LEFT PORT WITHOUT CLEARANCE!
WHAT-?!
BAM

Ohwww.. WHAT THE HELL?
WE COULDN'T HAVE LEFT PORT...
A...A MISSILE SUB?!
BEEP
SPZK!

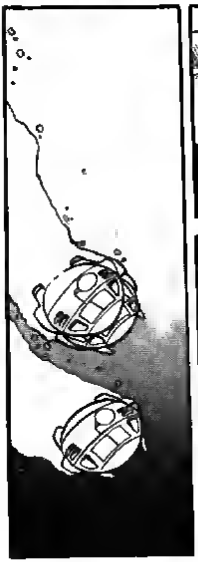
A SECURITY LASER AFTER ME, eh?
KSSHHH
EXCEPT THE FIRE-FIGHTING NOZZLES TOOK IT OUT..
WHICH MEANS THE SHIP'S COMPUTER ISN'T OPERATING IT!
SOMEONE IS ACCESSING SECURITY SYSTEMS MANUALLY?
THE ENGINE IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE MAIN COMPUTER...SO ONLY SOMEONE ON THE BRIDGE WOULD BE ABLE TO INTERVENE!
BUT I STILL DON'T GET IT-- WHO ON THIS PLANET WOULD WANT A MISSILE SUB?!
KREEK
HHHNNK!
DON'T MOVE!
Uh-oh ..
WHAT?!
WHO?!

EREBUS ?!
PANDORA ?!
...?!
DON'T TELL ME YOU GOT CAUGHT UP IN THIS, TOO?'
GUESS WE BOTH LUCKED OUT, huh? HAH HA.
WELL, N-NO...
I... er...
KCHINK!
THE SUB IS SLOWING DOWN!
MAYBE THEY WANT TO SURRENDER.
BELOW COMBAT SPEED?! YOU THINK THEY'LL STOP?


VRMM
VRMM
I THINK THAT ATTACK WAS JUST MEANT TO SLOW US DOWN-- A FEINT.
WHOEVER IT IS SEEMS TO HAVE A SCHEDULE THEY'RE TRYING TO KEEP.


AM I RIGHT?
IN THAT CASE, THE SOONER WE ATTACK, THE BETTER RIGHT?! WHATEVER THEY'RE UP TO, IT'S NOT GOOD!

PROBABLY. ANYWAY, THESE ISLA-CLASS SUBMERSIBLES CAN OUTDIVE ANY MISSILE SUB.
LET'S GIVE THAT TRUCK DRIVER SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT--
WE'LL ATTACK FROM BELOW!



BEEP BEEP

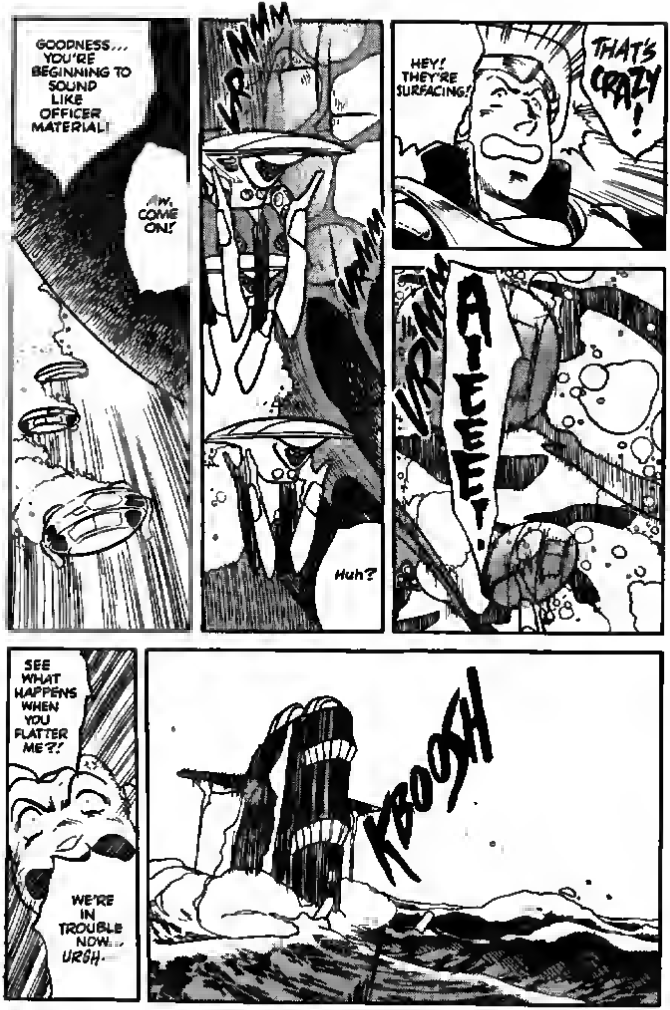
BEEP BEEP
?!

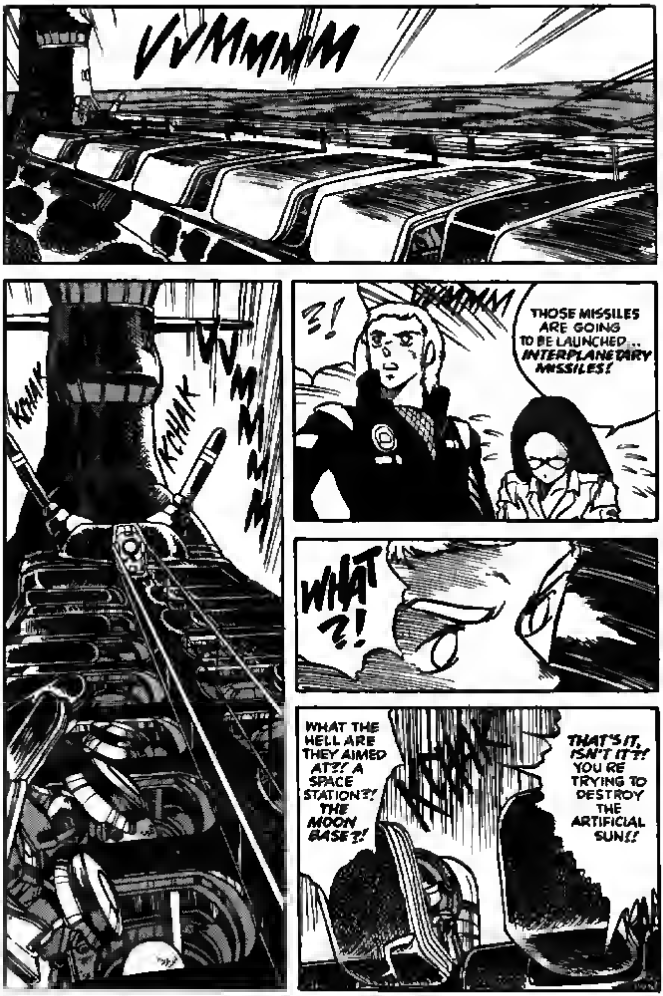
OUT OF MY WAY!
WHDD
HNGF!
BEEP
PANDORA!
YOU...
.....
.....
.....

"RETURN FIRE MANUALLY," IT SAYS! WHY DIDN'T IT ALREADY SINK THEM?!
TAKKA TAK
TORPEDOES... LET'S SEE...
TAKKA TAKKA
OPERATION COMPLETE
Hmm?
TAKKA TAK TAKKA
TAKKA
NO TORPEDOES LOADED. COMPUTER ACCESS LOCKED. THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK.
NO... .....
KSHHH
PANDORA !
PANDORA?!
Ohhh... I...
TRICKED! I'VE BEEN SUCH A FOOL!!
BAM
THAT... THAT BASTARD !!
?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, PANDORA?!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHO TRICKED YOU? ANSWER ME!!
NO.. I.. .....
PANDORA!!
PLEASE..
PLEASE TELL ME
VRMMM

I HAVEN'T DETECTED ANY LAUNCH TRANSIENTS-- HOW COME?
SYAAAH!
IF YOU'RE CONSCIOUS AGAIN, YOU CAN START DRIVING YOUR OWN SUB!
I'M GONNA CHARGE YOU FOR THE FUEL!
OH, HOW PERFECTLY THOUGHTLESS OF ME!
YOU GOT ANY SONOBUOYS LOADED IN YOUR TUBES?
DIVE UNDER THE SUB AND FIRE IT OFF-- LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET A REACTION OUT OF THEM.
GOT YOU!
BEEP
KVVAOOSHH
KANG
THAT SHOULD DO IT--WE'LL MOVE UP ALONGSIDE AND HOOK OUR MANIPULATORS ONTO THE DECK RAILING!
LET'S GO!


GOODNESS... YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE OFFICER MATERIAL!
AW, COME ON!
VRMM
VRMM
VRMM
Huh?
HEY! THEY'RE SURFACING!
THAT'S CRAZY!
AIEEE!
SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FLATTER ME?!
WE'RE IN TROUBLE NOW... URSH.
KBOOSH

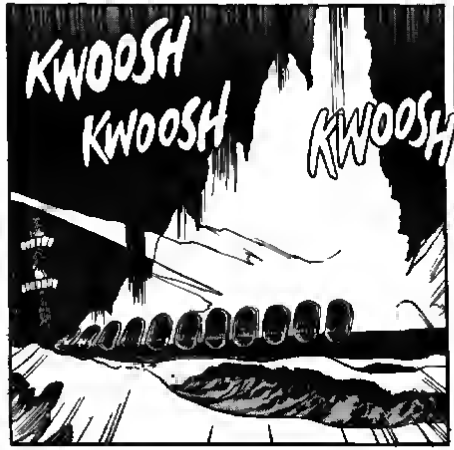

VVMMMM
KRHAK
KRHAK
VVMMMM
THOSE MISSILES ARE GOING TO BE LAUNCHED... INTERPLANETARY MISSILES!
WHAT?!
WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY AIMED AT?! A SPACE STATION?! THE MOON BASE?!
THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT?! YOU'RE TRYING TO DESTROY THE ARTIFICIAL SUN!!

YOU MUST BE CRAZY!! WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO THAT?!
I'M NOT THE CRAZY ONE!!
YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THIS PLANET WOULD BE VALUABLE TO US?!
BUT JUST LOOK AT WHAT THE MEDDLING OF THE VENUSIANS HAS DONE TO IT!
IF AN ENVIRONMENT PERMITS ONE LIFEFORM TO SURVIVE, IT'S GOING TO NOURISH OTHER KINDS OF LIFE, TOO--THAT'S INEVITABLE! AND DESPITE OUR ATTEMPTS TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS, ALREADY SEVERAL MILLION SPECIES OF LIFE HAVE EVOLVED HERE WITH DNA STRUCTURES UNIQUE TO THIS PLANET!!
YES, MAYBE... BUT--
LIKE THOSE GIANT REPTILES YOU GUYS HUNT DOWN WITH YOUR SUBS!
A YEAR ON THIS PLANET ISN'T LIKE A YEAR ON VENUS-- IT'S THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY FIVE DAYS LONG! TEMPERATURE-ADAPTIVE CHANGES ARE INCREDIBLY RAPID!
THE MOST RECENT SMALL LAND ANIMALS CAN MAINTAIN THEIR BODY TEMPERATURE ON THEIR OWN! DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?!
THEY'RE MAMMALS, JUST LIKE US!

IF A LIFEFORM EMERGES THAT CAN RETAIN DNA INFORMATION MORE RELIABLY AND IN GREATER QUANTITY THAN WE VENUSIANS DO...
...WE WILL DIE OFF, NO MATTER HOW MUCH LAND RESOURCES WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL!

SO YOU'RE DESTROYING THE ARTIFICIAL SUN...

BUT...
BUT I'M JUST A PAWN TO BE SACRIFICED...

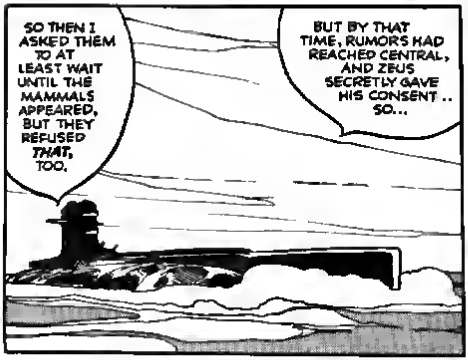

KWOOSH
KWOOSH
KWOOSH

POF
POF
POF

DID THE SECOND STAGE ROCKETS FIRE ?
≫sniff≪
LET ME SEE...
.....
YEP, EVERY ONE OF THEM.

EREBUS..
YES ..?

ACTUALLY, I REQUESTED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE TERRAFORMING PROJECT BE HALTED..
...BUT THEY SAID MY ARGUMENTS WEREN'T CONVINCING, AND THE RISK WAS MINIMAL...

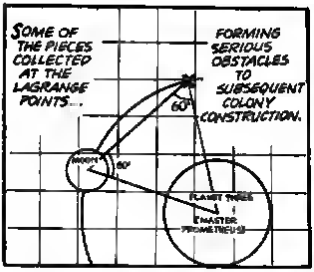

SO THEN I ASKED THEM TO AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL THE MAMMALS APPEARED, BUT THEY REFUSED THAT, TOO.
BUT BY THAT TIME, RUMORS HAD REACHED CENTRAL, AND ZEUS SECRETLY GAVE HIS CONSENT .. SO...

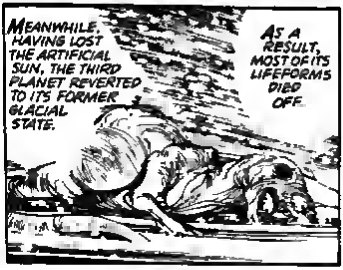
BUT WHY GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO KEEP IT SECRET?

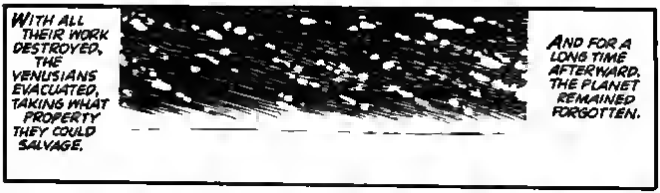
IF HE ORDERED IT STOPPED IN HIS OWN NAME, IT WOULD AFFECT HIS POLITICAL STANDING, I SUPPOSE...
YEAH... POLITICIANS ARE A SELFISH BUNCH.
NOW I GET IT...
SO THAT'S WHY THEY USED A MISSILE SUB··THEY'RE HARD TO DETECT, AND DON'T REQUIRE A LARGE SUPPORT BASE..
I..I WONDER WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME..?
WE'LL, YOU'VE DONE A PRETTY SEVERE THING.. NO DOUBT THERE WILL BE RETRIBUTION IN KIND.
I GUESS SO...
WE'RE IN AN AGE NOW WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY SPACE COLONIES AND LABS THAT THEY OBSTRUCT NAVIGATION.
I GUESS ONLY INTERSTELLAR SPACE REMAINS FOR THE VENUSIANS..
IT'LL NEVER WORK.
Huh?

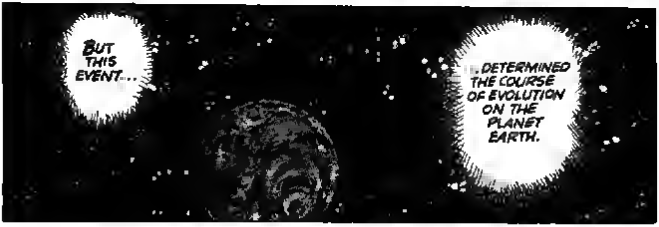
WE'VE REACHED OUR LIMIT AS A SPECIES...
HE.Ty 67.8x
LIFEFORMS WITH A DNA STRUCTURE BETTER THAN OURS, huh...
AND THEY MAY OUTNUMBER US ALREADY.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE YELLED AT YOU EARLIER.
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
EREBUS..
THANK YOU...

THE MISSILE TRAJECTORIES WERE FLAWLESS. THE ARTIFICIAL SUN ON THE LUNAR SURFACE WAS DESTROYED, AND A CHUNK OF BEDROCK FIVE HUNDRED MILES IN DIAMETER WAS BLOWN BEYOND THE ORBIT OF MARS.
THE EXPLOSION PULVERIZED APPROXIMATELY SIX PERCENT OF THE MOON'S MASS, AND HALTED ITS ROTATION.




MEANWHILE, HAVING LOST THE ARTIFICIAL SUN, THE THIRD PLANET REVERTED TO ITS FORMER GLACIAL STATE.
AS A RESULT, MOST OF ITS LIFEFORMS DIED OFF.


WITH ALL THEIR WORK DESTROYED, THE VENUSIANS EVACUATED, TAKING WHAT PROPERTY THEY COULD SALVAGE.
AND FOR A LONG TIME AFTERWARD, THE PLANET REMAINED FORGOTTEN.



END · BLACK MAGIC CHAPTER ONE: "BOWMAN"

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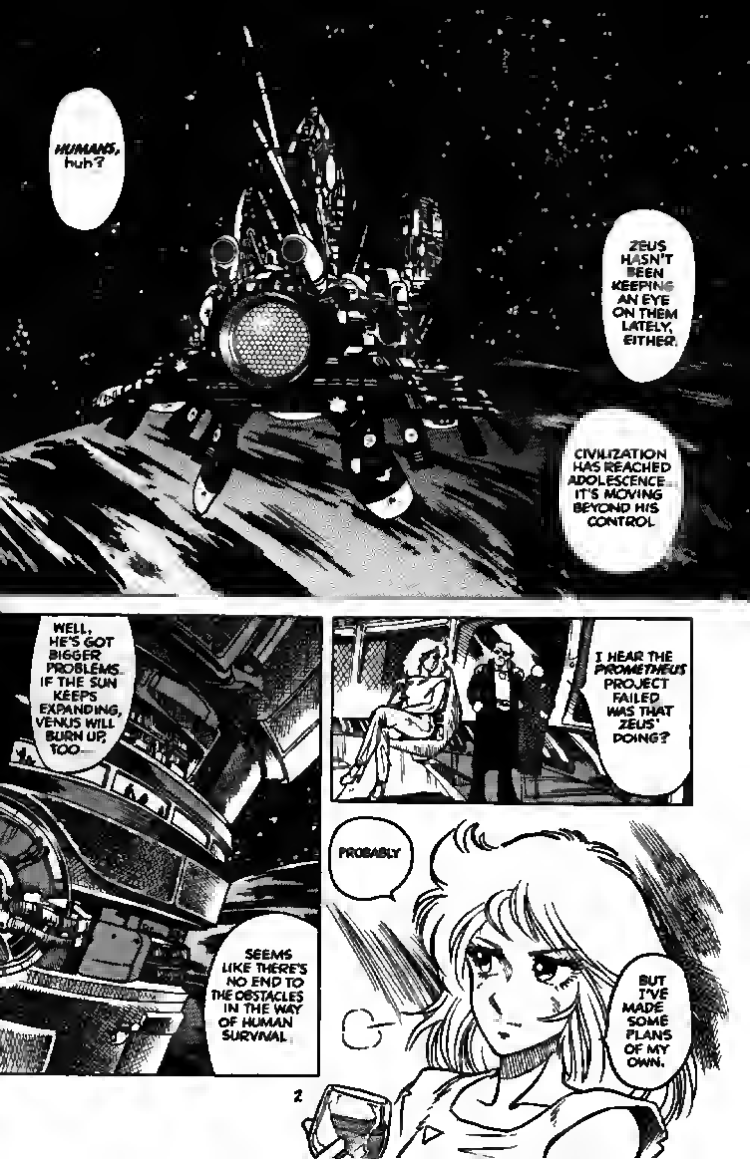
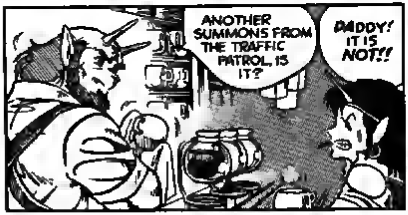
ECLIPSE INTERNATIONAL
Masamune Shirow's
seminal first work
BLACK
Magic
Book
Two
of
Four

BLACK MAGIC
by Masamune Shirow
Translation by Alan Gleason and Toren Smith
Lettering and Retouch by L. Lois Buhalis
Edited by Greg S. Baisden
PROLOGUE:
OPEN UP
NO EVIDENCE WAS EVER UNCOVERED ON VENUS TO LINK ZEUS WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ARTIFICIAL SUN ORBITING EARTH. AND SO...


HUMANS, huh?
ZEUS HASN'T BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON THEM LATELY, EITHER.
CIVILIZATION HAS REACHED ADOLESCENCE... IT'S MOVING BEYOND HIS CONTROL
WELL, HE'S GOT BIGGER PROBLEMS. IF THE SUN KEEPS EXPANDING, VENUS WILL BURN UP, TOO—
SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO END TO THE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF HUMAN SURVIVAL.
I HEAR THE *PROMETHEUS* PROJECT FAILED WAS THAT ZEUS' DOING?
PROBABLY.
BUT I'VE MADE SOME PLANS OF MY OWN.

TELL YASHA AND GOKU TO MEET ME
AND HAVE SOLOMON PREPARE THE SHUTTLE
PARK THE SHIP AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE, WOULD YOU?
DON'T MOVE IT INTO ORBIT!

MAIN STREET · SHIPBOARD COFFEE SHOP ONIMAL



WELL, WELL?
OMIMAL
Hmm?

Mr. SOHN GOKU... JUST THE FELLOW I WANTED TO SEE.
IT'S FROM TYPHON, RIGHT?
YES.

I'VE HEARD THE LATEST--THINGS MUST BE TOUGH ON YOU, TOO.
HANG IN THERE!

TING-A-LING
YO!

HEY, MONKEY FACE!
WANT AN APPLE?
YOU SHOULD TALK, DONKEY EARS!

I'LL HAVE A "BLUE MOUNTAIN" COFFEE.
OKAY!
Hee, hee.. THE MONKEY WANTS A MOUNTAIN!

HEY, HEY! LOOK WHO'S HERE!

THAT'S ENOUGH OF YOUR STUPID JOKES!!

SHUTTLE HANGAR
THIS IS RIDIC-ULOUS!
JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
WASTING HALF A PAGE ON SOMETHING THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE STORY!?
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
TYPHON!
HAVE YOU CHOSEN A LANDING SITE?
Hmm.. LET'S SEE.
PUT US DOWN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF NORTH LOBE.
AYE, AYE!
SAY, TYPHON..

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ONCE WE LAND ON VENUS?
BLACK MAGIC, OF COURSE!
Huh?
YOU DON'T MEAN SORCERY USED FOR EVIL PURPOSES, DO YOU? YOU'VE NEVER--
ONLY ACCORDING TO ZEUS!
ANYWAY, THAT'S WHAT I'LL BE DOING.
AND THERE'LL BE SPECTATORS, TOO...ZEUS AND HIS CRONIES.
DUNA TYPHON IS GOING TO BE MAKING HER FIRST BIG MOVE IN QUITE A WHILE!
Er... I REALLY DON'T THINK I GET IT!
?!
HAW, HAW! THAT'S NO SURPRISE!
SEE YOU LATER...

Black Magic Chapter Two:

BOOBY TRAP

BATTLEFIELD: Part One

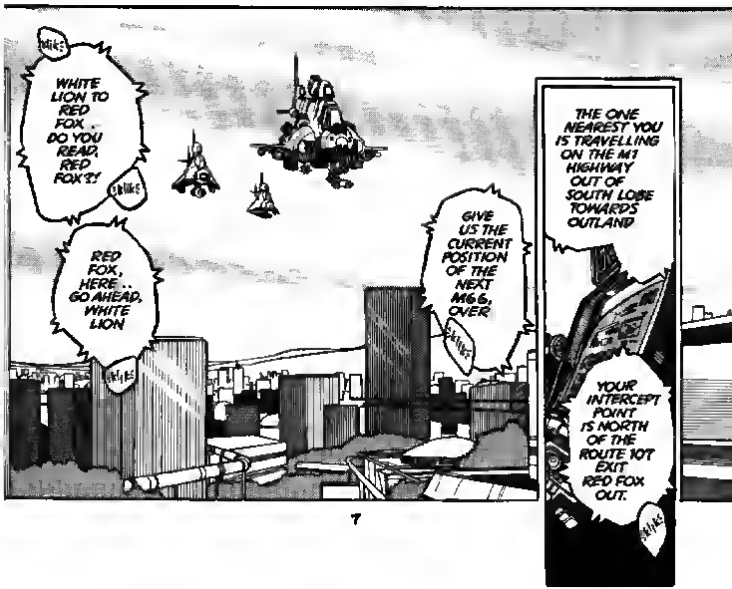
BKOOM
BEEP
MA-66
MA-
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
KCHAK
BKOOM

KSSH
KSSH
KSSH
WHOK
SKRANG
CHOK
KANGG
SKRAK

CHOK
KRANG

BEEP!
SKRAK
AAA!
KOOM
Whaaa
SKRAK
SKREE
SSSHHHHHHHH

WHMP
RIGHT!
YES, SIR!

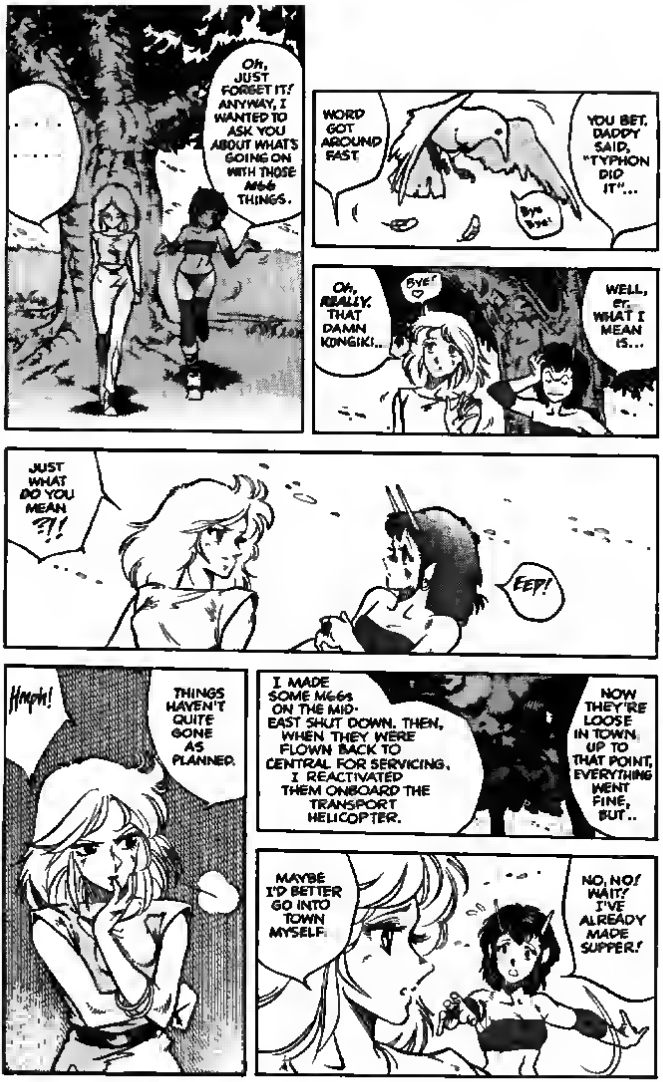

WHITE LION TO RED FOX... DO YOU READ, RED FOX?!
RED FOX, HERE.. GO AHEAD, WHITE LION
GIVE US THE CURRENT POSITION OF THE NEXT M66, OVER
THE ONE NEAREST YOU IS TRAVELLING ON THE M1 HIGHWAY OUT OF SOUTH LOBE TOWARDS OUTLAND
YOUR INTERCEPT POINT IS NORTH OF THE ROUTE 107 EXIT. RED FOX OUT.

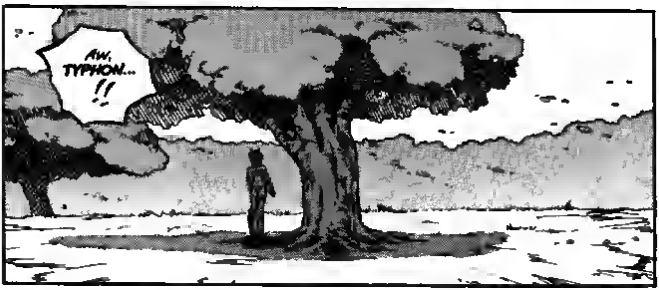
WE WON'T BE THERE FOR SEVEN MINUTES. RELAX.
YES, SIR.
Uh, CAPTAIN...?
CAPTAIN ADAMS, SIR?
YEAH?
YEAH, SURE... WHY NOT?
Aaahh.
Burp!
WHY DON'T YOU HAVE SOME?
YOU NEED A BREAK, TOO...
.....
.....
THE CITY'S DESERTED..
THEY EVACUATED EVERYONE TO THE SHELTERS.
WHY THE SHELTERS?
THEY DECLARE MARTIAL LAW?
THE TV AND RADIO ARE ALL SHUT DOWN. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.
THE CITIZENS HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD A THING-- THEY'RE ALL COWERING IN THE SHELTERS, POOR BASTARDS.

SO WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? ANY IDEAS, ROGER?
HOW THE HELL WOULD I KNOW, FOOL!
IT'S A LAST-DITCH EFFORT BY THE VENUS FEDERATION... TRYING TO HOLD ON TO POWER.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE HERE... THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE SERVICE CLASS HAVE TO CO-EXIST, WITH THE EXPECTED PROBLEMS
THE FEDERATION DOESN'T WANT THE AVERAGE CITIZEN TO KNOW THE ARMY USES ROBOT SOLDIERS FOR COMBAT.
AW, THOSE FRIGGIN' UPPER-CLASS JERKWADS!
MAKE ME SICK!
SO, WHAT DO YOU FIGURE THE ELITE IS MAKING OF THIS MESS?
COME ON! WHAT ELSE?
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE THE BLAME!
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH.
WE'VE GOT A MISSION TO TAKE OUT THE FOUR M66 UNITS THAT HAVE ENTERED THE CITY.
WE'RE SOLDIERS, NOT PHILOSOPHERS.
RIGHT. THIS M66 HAS AN INDEPENDENT INTERLOCK SYSTEM.
THIS NEXT M66 MAY BE THE ONE THAT WAS ENGAGED IN JOINT OPS WITH THE LAST UNIT
YOU MEAN THE ONE THAT GOT OUT WHEN WE DROVE THEM INTO THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGE?

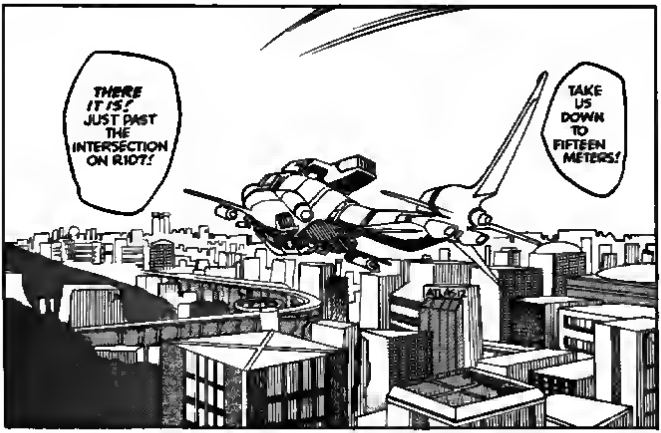
NORTH LOBE
EXCUSE ME...
JERK! WHERE ARE YOUR MANNERS?! YOU SCARED THEM ALL AWAY!

ABOUT THE POWER OF THE KUTA SWORD...
DUNA TYPHON
HOW DARE YOU READ OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS!
GET LOST!
ABOUT THE ONE THOUSAND AND TWENTY-THREE SORCERIES...
I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE!
WAIT.. IS THAT YOU, YASHA...?
DUNA TYPHON
MY, MY! AREN'T WE TOUCHY TODAY!! WHATEVER IS THE MATTER WITH MISS DUNA TYPHON?
I CAN'T ABIDE THAT SORT OF HUMAN--WHETHER IT'S ONE OF YOUR PHANTOMS OR NOT!
YOU WANT SOME-THING?
I LIKE YOUR FACE WHEN YOU GET THAT AGGRESSIVE LOOK
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN A MALE, eh? HA, HA!


OH, JUST FORGET IT! ANYWAY, I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THOSE M66 THINGS.
. . .
. . .
WORD GOT AROUND FAST.
YOU BET. DADDY SAID, "TYPHON DID IT"...
BYE BYE!
OH, REALLY. THAT DAMN KONGIKI..
BYE!
WELL, ER, WHAT I MEAN IS...
JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?!?!
EEP!
Hmph!
THINGS HAVEN'T QUITE GONE AS PLANNED.
I MADE SOME M66s ON THE MID-EAST SHUT DOWN. THEN, WHEN THEY WERE FLOWN BACK TO CENTRAL FOR SERVICING, I REACTIVATED THEM ONBOARD THE TRANSPORT HELICOPTER.
NOW THEY'RE LOOSE IN TOWN. UP TO THAT POINT, EVERYTHING WENT FINE, BUT..
MAYBE I'D BETTER GO INTO TOWN MYSELF.
NO, NO! WAIT! I'VE ALREADY MADE SUPPER!

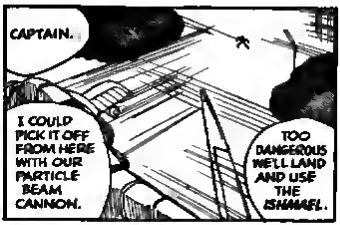


BATTLEFIELD: Part Two

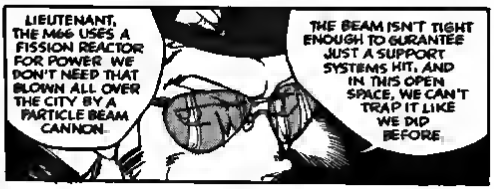


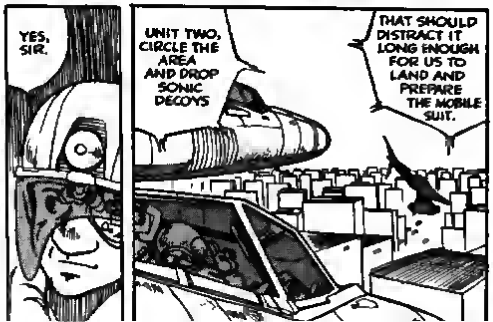
BEEP

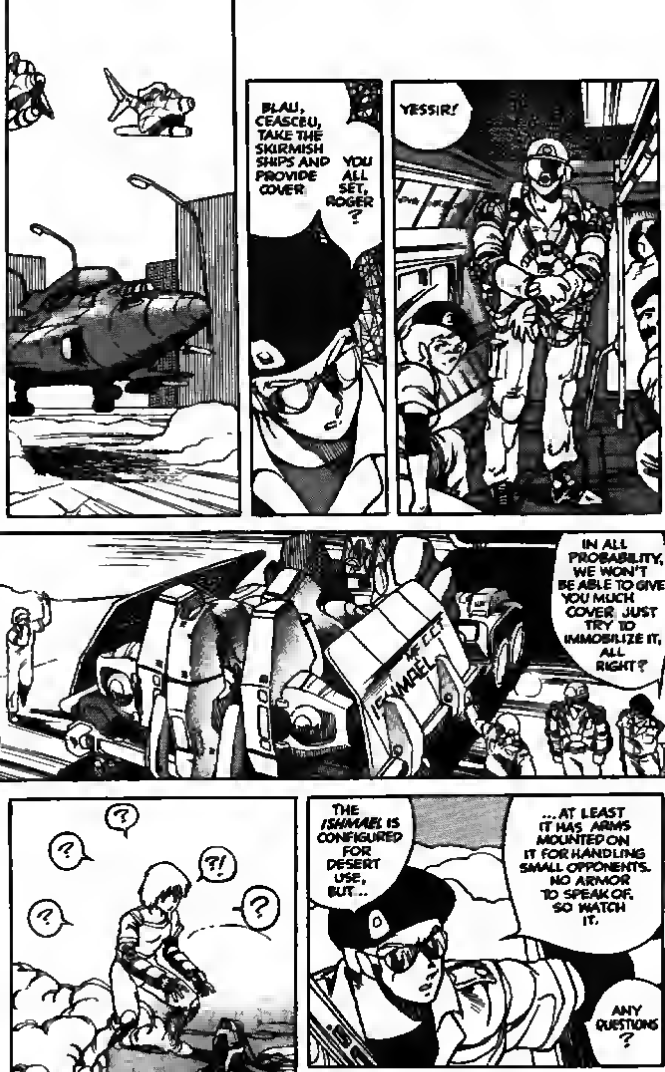
IT'S PAST ..
JUST THAT PARTICULAR MODEL. IT'S A BIT FASTER THAN OFFICIAL SPECS SAY.


CAPTAIN.
I COULD PICK IT OFF FROM HERE WITH OUR PARTICLE BEAM CANNON.
TOO DANGEROUS WE'LL LAND AND USE THE ISHMAEL.

ROGER, PUT ON THE INTERFACE SUIT. I'LL NEED THE MOBILE SUIT FOR SUPPORT.
CAPTAIN, I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD-

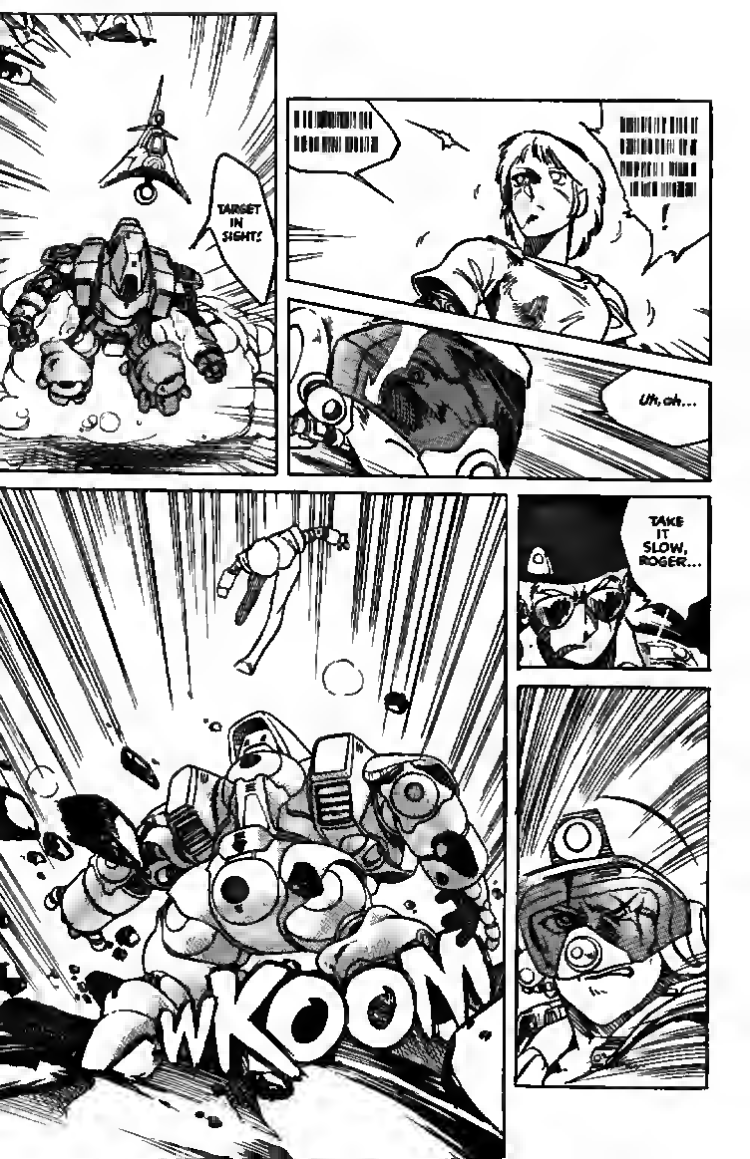

LIEUTENANT, THE M66 USES A FISSION REACTOR FOR POWER WE DON'T NEED THAT BLOWN ALL OVER THE CITY BY A PARTICLE BEAM CANNON.
THE BEAM ISN'T TIGHT ENOUGH TO GURANTEE JUST A SUPPORT SYSTEMS HIT, AND IN THIS OPEN SPACE, WE CAN'T TRAP IT LIKE WE DID BEFORE.

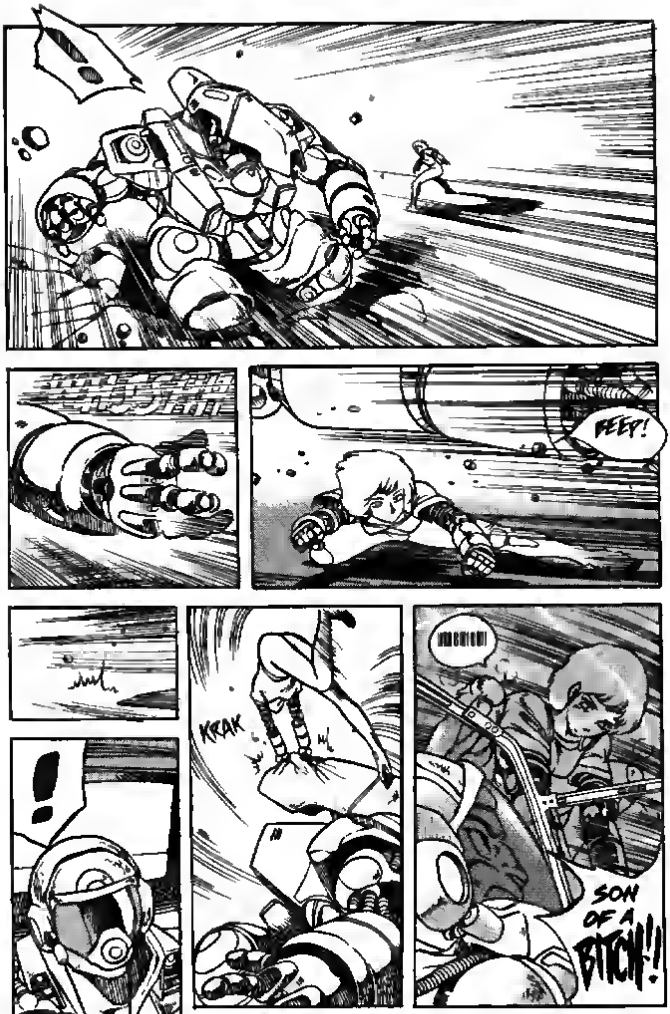

YES, SIR.
UNIT TWO, CIRCLE THE AREA AND DROP SONIC DECOYS
THAT SHOULD DISTRACT IT LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO LAND AND PREPARE THE MOBILE SUIT.


BLAU, CEASCEU, TAKE THE SKIRMISH SHIPS AND PROVIDE COVER.
YOU ALL SET, ROGER?
YESSIR!
IN ALL PROBABILITY, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU MUCH COVER. JUST TRY TO IMMOBILIZE IT, ALL RIGHT?
ISHMAEL
?
?
?!
?
?
THE ISHMAEL IS CONFIGURED FOR DESERT USE, BUT...
...AT LEAST IT HAS ARMS MOUNTED ON IT FOR HANDLING SMALL OPPONENTS. NO ARMOR TO SPEAK OF, SO WATCH IT.
ANY QUESTIONS?

THE M-66 IS MORE MANEUVER-ABLE ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE A PILOT.
YOU SHOULD THINK OF ITS POWER AS EQUAL TO YOUR OWN.
REMEMBER TO DO THINGS A ROBOT CAN'T. DON'T GIVE AWAY YOUR BIGGEST ADVANTAGE
YOUR OPPONENT IS MERELY A MACHINE. DON'T FORGET THAT.
BEEP
WHEEEEEE
BEEP
INTERFACE COMPLETED.
CLEAR THE AREA!

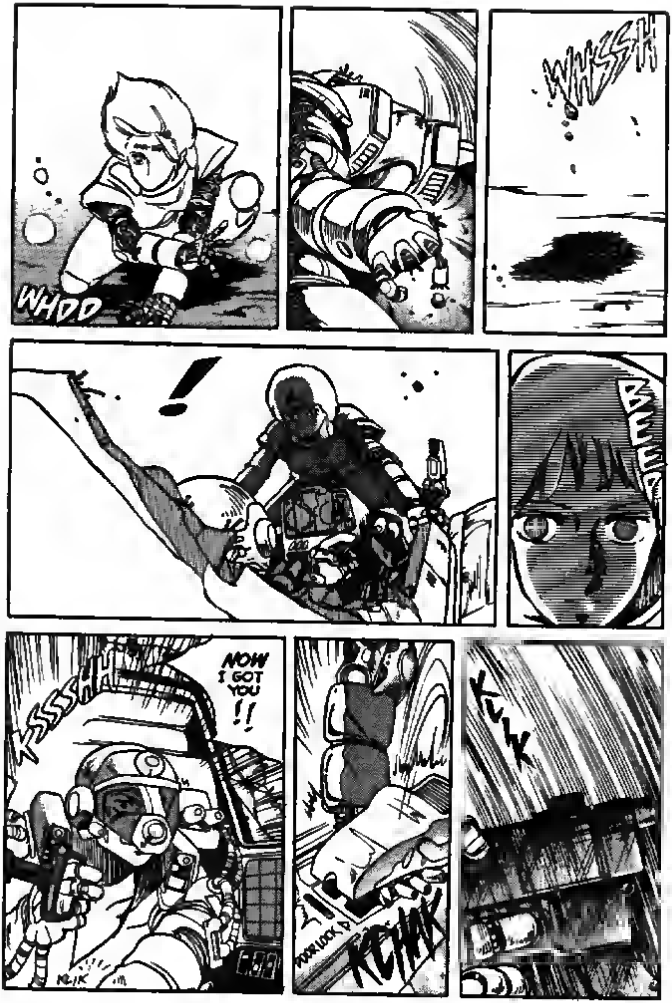
KLIK
KLIK
KANG
KNAK
ON MY WAY, CAPTAIN
VVRREEEEE
CHAK
KSHOOM
CAPTAIN, THE M-66 HAS LOCKED IN ON US!
CEASCU, COME AROUND FROM BEHIND ON THE RIGHT FLANK BLAU, YOU FOLLOW ROGER THROUGH THE MIDDLE

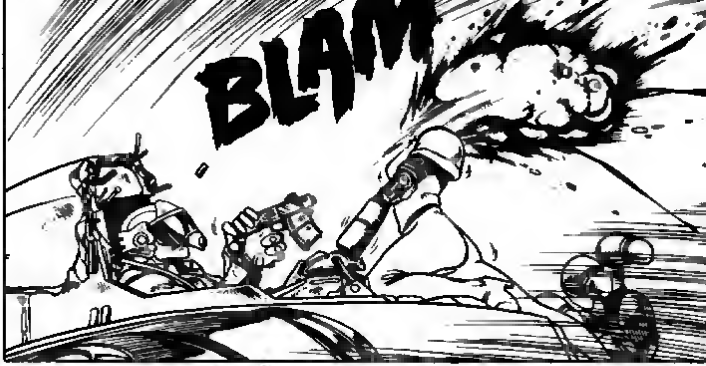

TARGET IN SIGHT!
!
Uh, oh...
TAKE IT SLOW, ROGER...
WKOOM


FEEP!
KRAK
SON OF A BITCH!!

ROGER! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
ROGER! YOU CAN'T BREAK THE REACTOR VESSEL WITH THAT SUIT!
HIT IT AS HARD AS YOU CAN!!
SKRAK
HNNG!
THAT IDIOT!!
WE CAN'T COVER HIM NOW!
BRRTTT
WRAMM
SHI--!

DAMN YOU!!
KANGG
SKRANGG
KREE
BEEP! BEEP!
?!


WHDD
WHSSH
!
BEEP
!SSSH
NOW I GOT YOU !!
KCHK
KUNK


BLAM

HAH!
CHAK
CHAK
BLAM

MISSION ACCOM-PLISHED, CAPTAIN
ANOTHER HEADLESS ONE... SORRY ABOUT THAT.
NO PROBLEM. AS LONG AS YOU'VE STILL GOT YOURS.
YOU HAD CEASCEU WORRIED FOR A MINUTE THERE, ROGER!
HEY!!
YOU, TOO!

WE'RE LEAVING THE TWO REMAINING M66s TO THE GRUNTS IN THE 42ND, eh?

YEAH, WELL ...THE M66s BELONGED TO THE 42ND IN THE FIRST PLACE.
FIGURE THEY DON'T WANT TO RELY ON US SPECIAL FORCES TYPES MORE THAN THEY HAVE TO.
BUT THE 42ND ARE JUST REGULAR TROOPS... THINK THEY CAN DO IT?

GOOD QUESTION.
STILL, THEY ACTED CONFIDENT WHEN I ASKED THEM ABOUT IT.

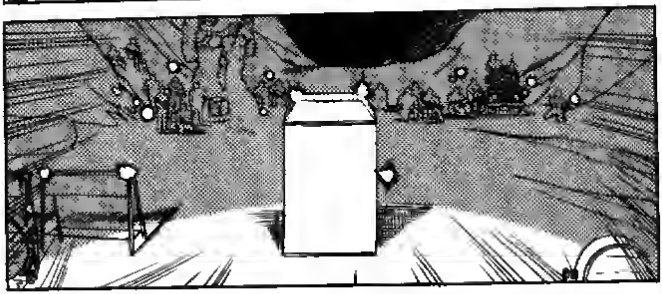
Huh...

RED FOX HERE...
THE NEXT M66 IS RUNNING ALONG THE MAIN HIGHWAY FROM SOUTH LODE THROUGH DIPHLODIA. THE 42ND IS DEPLOYED BETWEEN THE CITIES.
WHAT THE HELL?! BETWEEN THE CITIES?! DIPHLODIA HASN'T EVEN BEEN ALERTED YET! WHAT THE HELL IS THE 42ND UP TO?!

WELL, I'LL TRY TALKING TO THEM AGAIN.
KRIK
WHITE LION HERE... COME IN, RED FOX.
KRIK

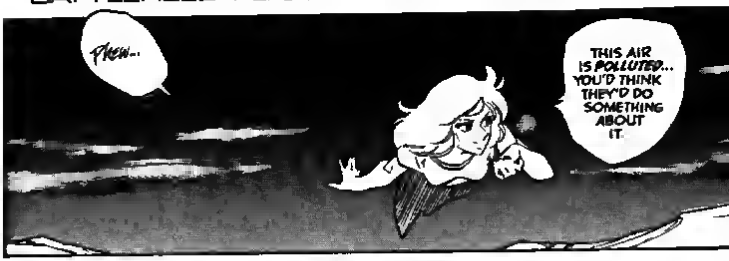
EITHER THEY HAVE A DEFINITE PLAN IN MIND FOR DESTROYING THE M66, OR THEY'RE OUT TO LUNCH. NO BETS!
CAPTAIN! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Hmm. CAPTAIN BARRIS IS WITH THEM. HE'LL KEEP THEM OUT OF TROUBLE.
STILL, I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF IT.
IN THE MOUNTAINS BETWEEN DIPHLODIA AND SOUTH LOBE
COM-MANDER!
WHAT IS IT?
MES-SAGE FROM CAPTAIN ADAMS, SIR!
I KNOW WHAT IT SAYS.. DON'T BOTHER READING IT
MY ASS IS ALREADY ON THE LINE FOR LETTING THOSE M66s ESCAPE I CAN'T LEAVE ANY MORE OF THIS JOB UP TO HIM..
IS IT READY YET, Dr. MATTHEW?
KCHIK
ANY TIME, COM-MANDER.
AND NOW..
...I'LL DEMONSTRATE WHY MOBILE SUITS ARE A THING OF THE PAST.

TELL ME, DOCTOR..
HOW WHAT'?
DO YOU HAVE TO DESTROY IT?
THEY'RE WORTH 12 MILLION EACH—
NOW, NOW...
IT'S JUST A ROBOT, AFTER ALL.
WHEN THE M66 RECEIVES AN ATTACK COMMAND, IT ATTACKS ANYTHING THAT MOVES, ABOVE A CERTAIN SIZE, OR ANY METALLIC OBJECT WITH A HEAT SOURCE ABOVE A CERTAIN LEVEL.
WHEN IT RECEIVES A "RETURN-TO-BLOCK" COMMAND, IT RETURNS TO ITS ANCHOR BLOCK "BED" UNTIL THEN, IT FIGHTS AS REQUIRED BY ITS PROGRAMMING.
IT CAN'T BE AFFECTED BY ANY OTHER COMMANDS-- IT JUST FIGHTS.
THE "BEDS" FOR THESE M66s WERE LOST ALONG WITH THE TRANSPORT HELOS CARRYING THEM. THEY'RE LIKE WASPS WITHOUT A HIVE TO RETURN TO.
WHAT A WASTE..
HEY, THEY'RE JUST TOOLS, COMMANDER!
SO THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THEM, EXCEPT BY DESTROYING THEM.
JUST LIKE REAL SOLDIERS... HAW, HAW!
GOD, I LOVE THIS KIND OF STUFF! Hee, hee, hee..

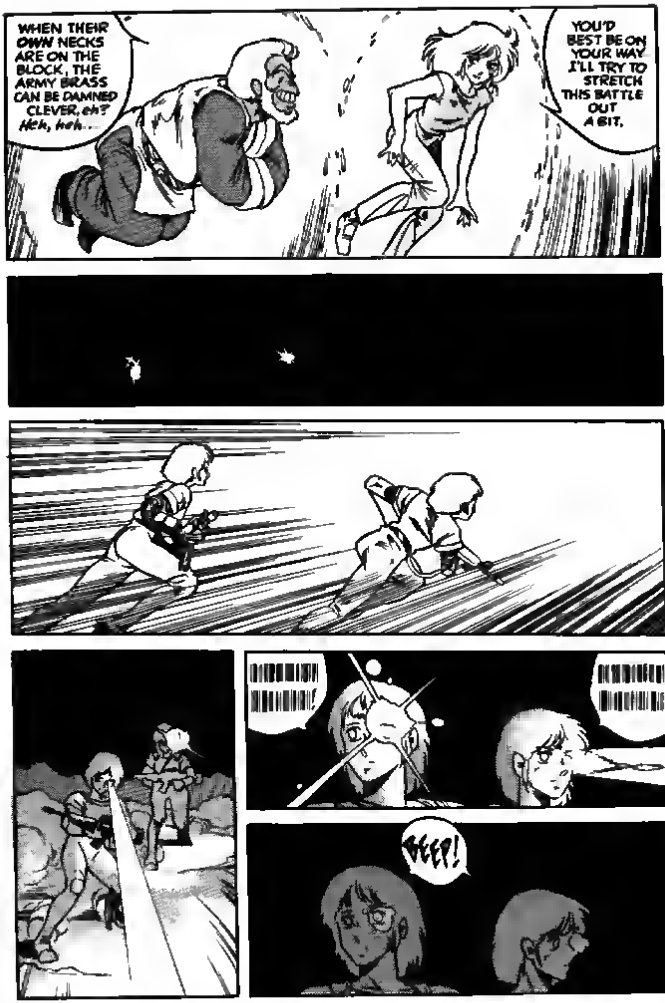


BATTLEFIELD: Part Three

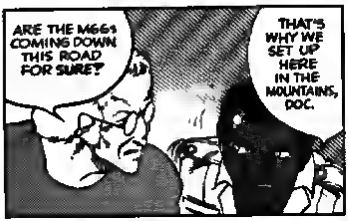
IN THE AIR ABOVE THE NORTH LOBE/ DIPHLODIA MOUNTAINS



WELL!
IF IT ISN'T GOKU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT AM I DOING HERE.? ODD QUESTION!
ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU BROUGHT YASHA AND ME ALONG FOR?
DON'T BE A SMART ALECK. ANYWAY, THE FACT THAT YOU'VE FIGURED OUT SOMETHING'S GOING ON SHOWS YOU'RE MORE MATURE THAN YASHA.
OR MAYBE I'M JUST SMART LIKE A MONKEY, eh? Heh, heh!
ARE YOU BRAGGING, OR WHAT?
OF COURSE! ANYWAY, WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
Hmm...
WHY DON'T YOU GO TO TEOTIHUACAN FOR ME?
INFORM ZEUS ABOUT THIS INCIDENT.
AND DO IT QUICKLY, ALL RIGHT?
THE MILITARY HASN'T TOLD ZEUS ABOUT THE ESCAPE OF THE M66 UNITS
I WONDER HOW THEY KEPT THE LOCAL EXECUTORS FROM TALKING...

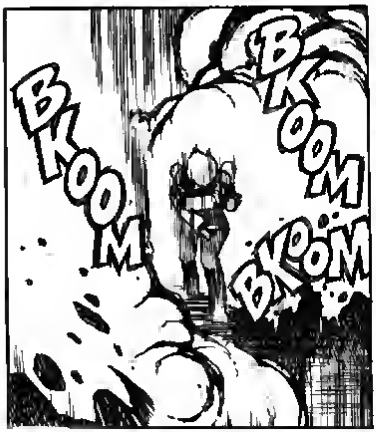

WHEN THEIR OWN NECKS ARE ON THE BLOCK, THE ARMY BRASS CAN BE DAMNED CLEVER, eh? Heh, heh...
YOU'D BEST BE ON YOUR WAY. I'LL TRY TO STRETCH THIS BATTLE OUT A BIT.
BEEP!

SEEMS LIKE THEY'VE LOCKED ON TO OUR LOCATION. THEY'VE SLOWED DOWN TO 40 MPH
AT LAST!! A REAL BATTLE FOR MY SWEET LITTLE MA-77!!
OH BOY OH BOY OH BOY!
BEEP
KSSHHH
KSSHHH
KAWG
KAWG
MMMM
MMMM


ARE THE M60s COMING DOWN THIS ROAD FOR SURE?
THAT'S WHY WE SET UP HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS, DOC.

BEEP

COMMENCING ACTION, SIR!
EXCELLENT!

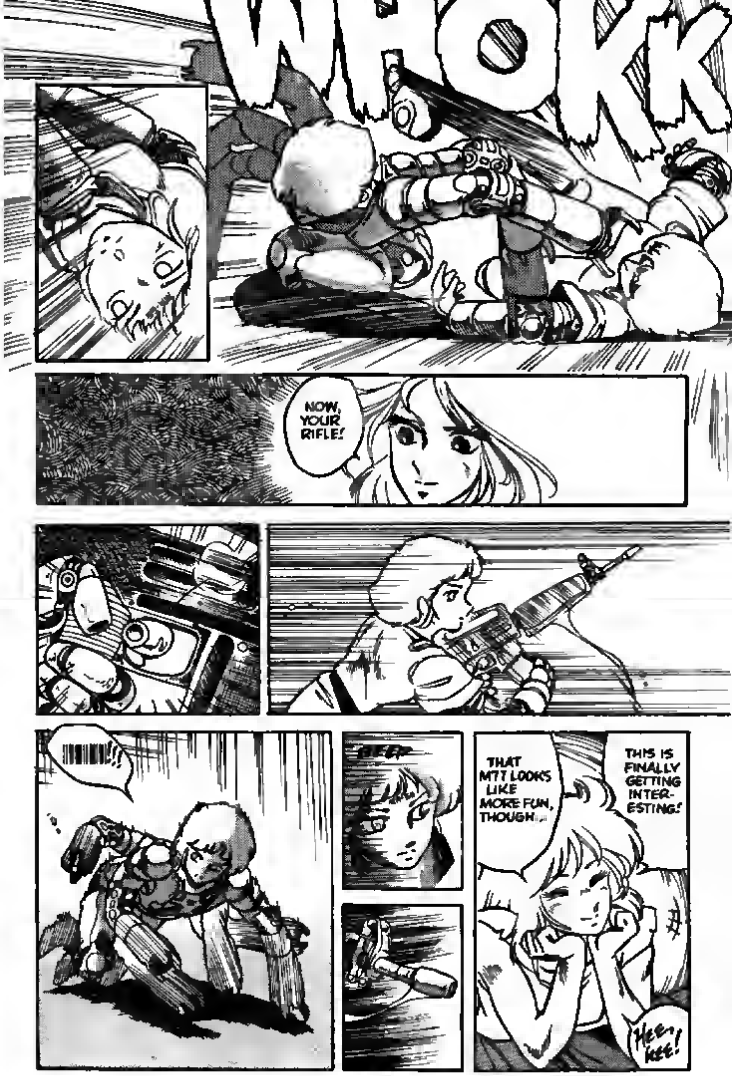

BKOOM
BKOOM
BKOOM

YOU'RE SURE IT DOESN'T NEED ANY SUPPORT?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU, COMMANDER... JUST RELAX! LEAVE IT TO THE MA-T7, AND BE SURE TO GET IT ALL ON VIDEO!

BOOM
WHOOSH
BOMF!
BRRTT

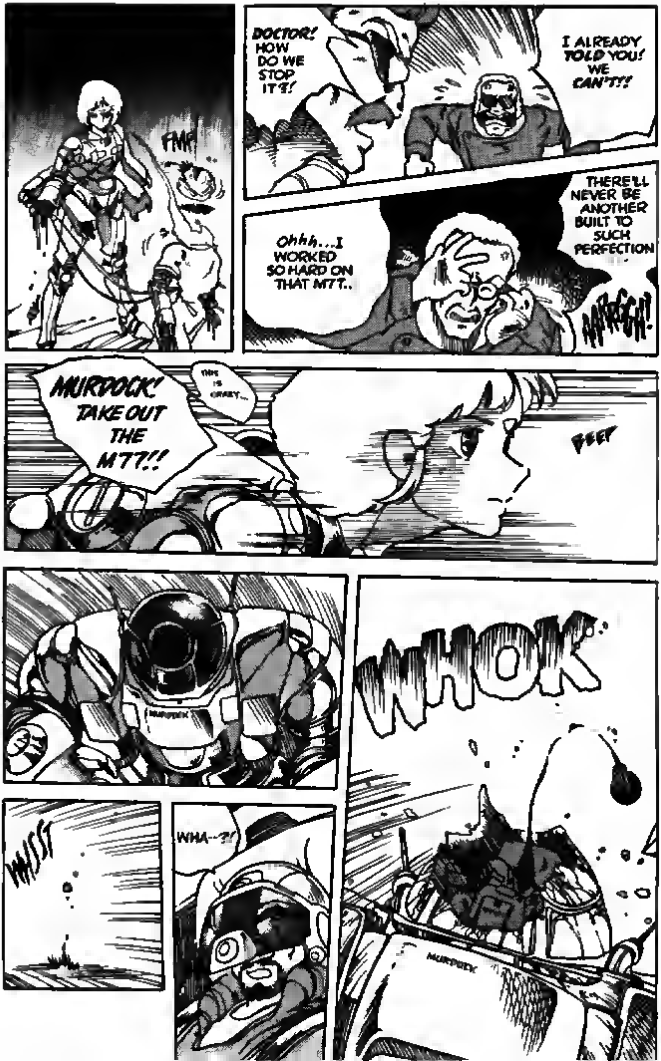
KRANG
SPAKK
SKNCH

SKRAK
WOW, THEY'RE REALLY GOING AT IT...
WELL, THIS JUST WON'T DO!
KANG
WHD
KSSHH
ZZKK
NE-66
WE CAN'T HAVE IT ENDING SO QUICKLY..
HEY! DON'T JUST LIE THERE! YOUR ENEMY'S JOINTS ARE LOCKED! USE YOUR LEGS!

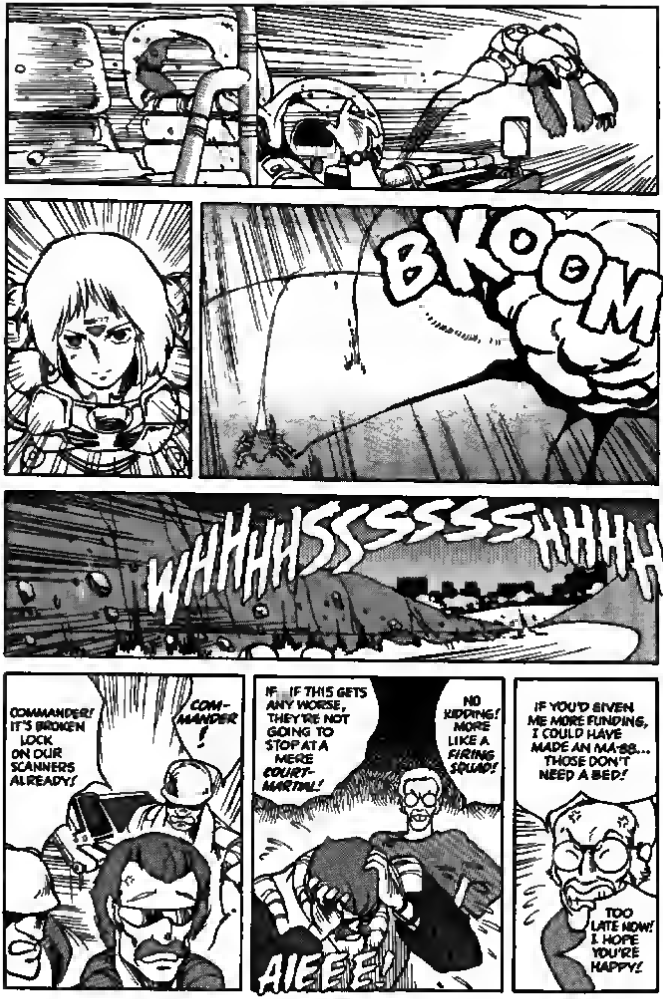

WHOKK
NOW, YOUR RIFLE!
CLICK
BEEP
THAT M77 LOOKS LIKE MORE FUN, THOUGH...
THIS IS FINALLY GETTING INTERESTING!
Hee-hee!

BKOOM
BKOOM
BKOOM
WHOOSH
WHOOSH

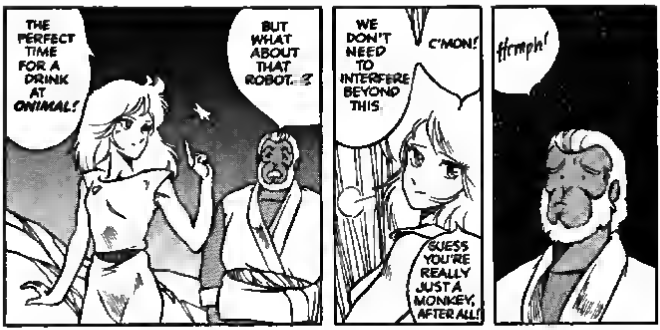
SKRANGG
BLOOM
KRAK
WRAMM
YAAHUH!
THE BED!!


FMP
DOCTOR! HOW DO WE STOP IT?!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU! WE CAN'T!!!
THERE'LL NEVER BE ANOTHER BUILT TO SUCH PERFECTION
Ohhh...I WORKED SO HARD ON THAT M7?..
AAAAGGH!
MURDOCK! TAKE OUT THE M7?!!
THIS IS CRAZY...
BEEP
MURPHY
WHOK
MURPHY
WHISSS
WHA--?!

WHOK
BLAM
BLAM BLAM
DON'T MOVE! STAY STILL!
IF YOU DON'T MOVE, IT WON'T GO AFTER YOU!
AIEEEE!!!
VRMMMM
STOP, YOU IDIOT!
SKREEEEEEEEE
VRM-M
WHDD
SKCHH


BKOOM
WHHHHSSSSSSHHHH
COMMANDER! IT'S BROKEN LOCK ON OUR SCANNERS ALREADY!
COM-MANDER!
IF... IF THIS GETS ANY WORSE, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO STOP AT A MERE COURT-MARTIAL!
NO KIDDING! MORE LIKE A FIRING SQUAD!
AIEEE!
IF YOU'D GIVEN ME MORE FUNDING, I COULD HAVE MADE AN MA-88... THOSE DON'T NEED A BED!
TOO LATE NOW! I HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY!

ALL TAKEN CARE OF!
Sob!
NATURALLY, THEY HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE AS TO WHAT WE'RE UP TO.
EVERYONE OVER AT ZEUS' HQ MUST BE GOING BERSERK BY NOW!
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAIT TO SEE FOR YOURSELF?
YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED!
SO WHY SHOULD ZEUS AND THE OTHERS GET SO FLIPPED-OUT OVER THIS LITTLE PROBLEM?
I DON'T GET IT.
NO, YOU SECOND-GENERATION TYPES WOULDN'T...
THIS IS A SAD EVENT FOR THE BIOROIDS. THEY CAN ONLY REIGN AS TOOLS...
...AND NOW THEY'RE FORCED TO SEE WHAT TERRIFYING CREATURES HUMANS CAN BE!
LET'S GO. OUR WORK HERE IS FINISHED.
=Yawwn=
Huh?


THE PERFECT TIME FOR A DRINK AT ONIMAL!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT ROBOT...?
WE DON'T NEED TO INTERFERE BEYOND THIS.
C'MON!
GUESS YOU'RE REALLY JUST A MONKEY, AFTER ALL!
Hrmph!

END BATTLEFIELD Part Three

BLACK MAGIC™ Book 2 of 4, June 1990.
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P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436.
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In this English edition of *Black Magic* the artwork has been reversed to read left-to-right for the American audience.

Millennia ago, human life existed only on Venus—under command of supercomputer Nemesis, which generated an elite "Executor" class of biorolds to defend the Venusian Federation. In time, the Executors dwindled, but their most successful comrade, Zeus, became the Federation's civilian ruler. Though further biorold production was banned, Nemesis secretly crafted a final Executor—Typhon—and raised her hidden among the civilian population. This second chapter of *Black Magic* lays the foundation of the popular anime *Black Magic M-66* unfolds Typhon's plan to depose Zeus, challenging him with citywide deployment of M-66 combat robots—automaton's programmed for selective disruption and destruction of the city's vital buildings and operations. Zeus' military engineers respond in kind, unleashing one of their new M-77 combat robots to a desperate attempt to stop the M-66. Typhon and her allies struggle on, trying to buy time for their main objective: the disconnection of Nemesis—driven to the brink of insanity by contradictory program imperatives!

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ECLIPSE INTERNATIONAL
Masamune Shirow's seminal first work
BLACK Magic
Book Three of Four

Black Magic Chapter Two:
BOOBY TRAP

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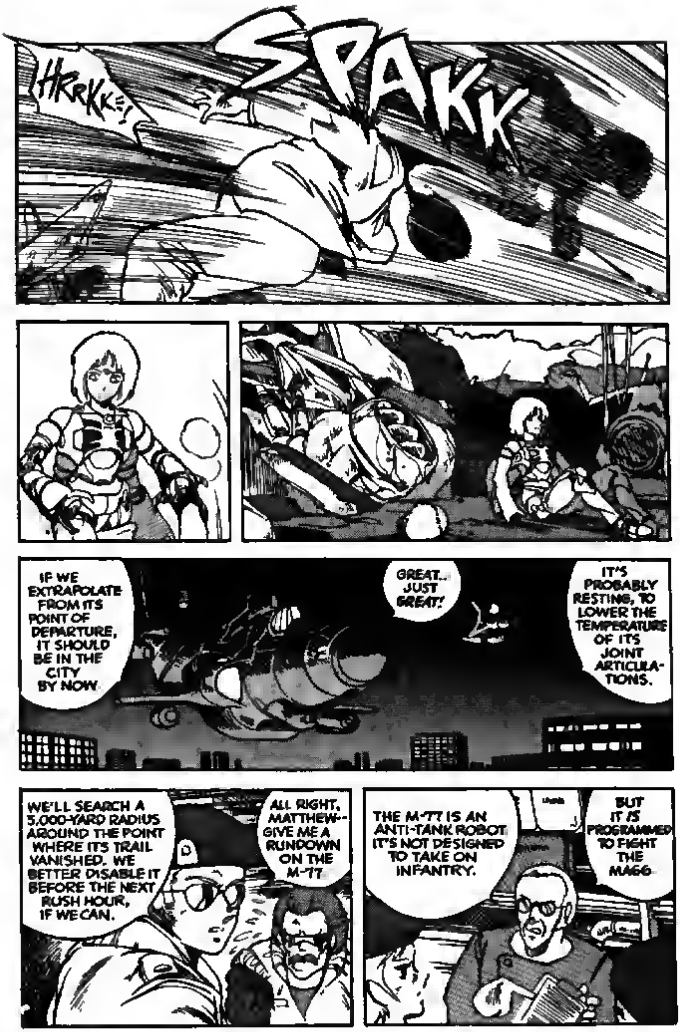
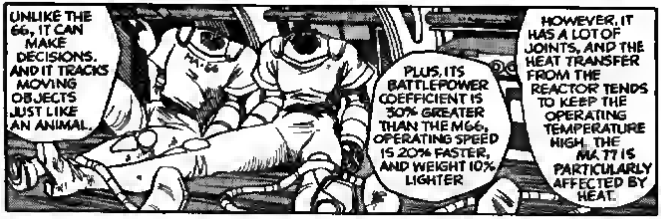
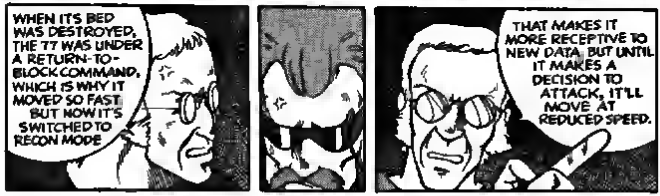
BLACK MAGIC
by Masamune Shirow
Translation by Alan Gleason and Toren Smith
Lettering and Retouch by L. Lois Buhalis
Edited by Greg S. Baisden

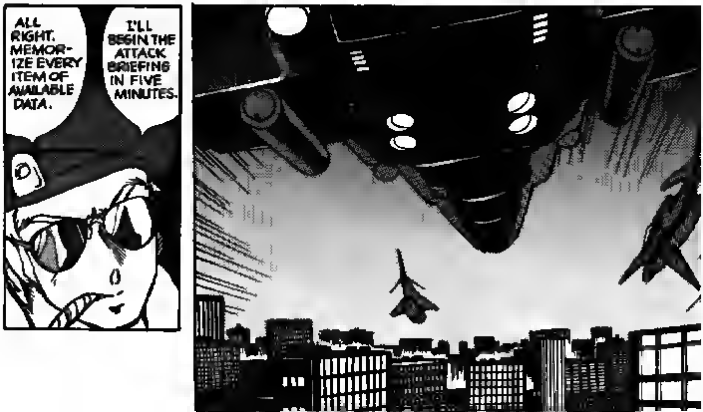
KI-IK
KSHH
KSHH
OH, YOU GOT AN EEEVIL HEART.. SO EVIL...
♪DA DA DA DUM DA..♪
HUMAN FORM.. ATTACK REQUIRED..? EXTREMELY SLOW SPEED (BELOW MINIMUM) THEREFORE ATTACK NOT REQUIRED.
BATTLEPOWER COEFFICIENT MEASUREMENT EQUALS ZERO, THEREFORE ATTACK NOT REQUIRED
OH, JEEZ! D-D-DON'T HURT ME! I'M NOT... I WASN'T... I DIDN'T...
P-PLEASE! I I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS AT HOME, AND..
HUH?!
WHY, IT'S JUST A GODDAMN FAKE!
SCARE ME, WILL YA?!
?

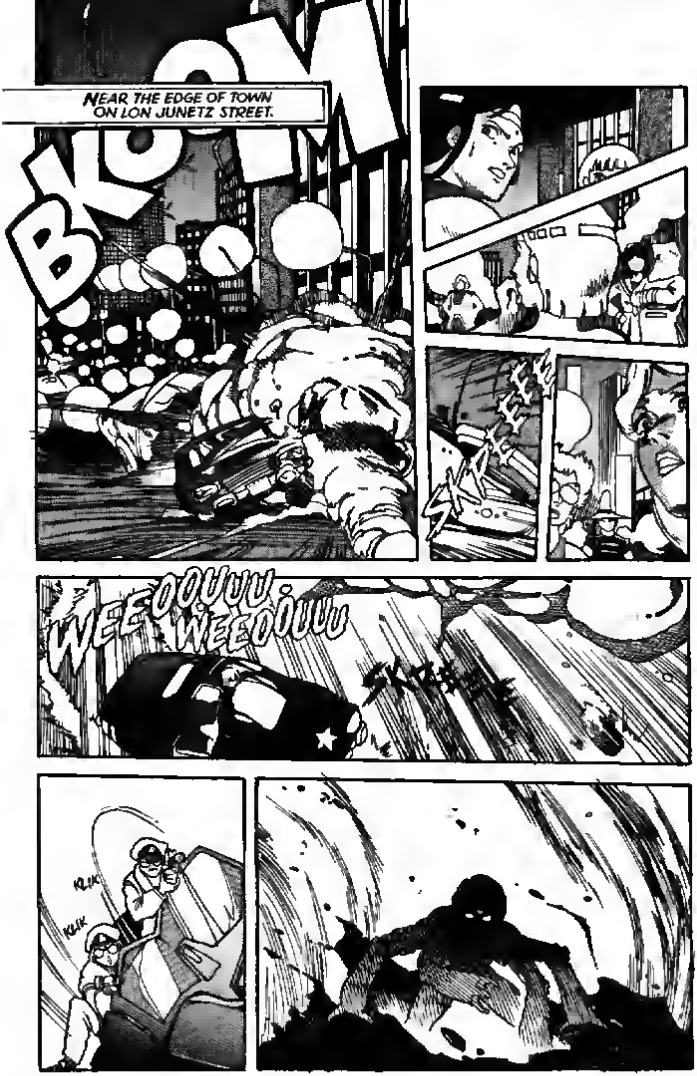

SPAKK
HRRKK!
IF WE EXTRAPOLATE FROM ITS POINT OF DEPARTURE, IT SHOULD BE IN THE CITY BY NOW.
GREAT... JUST GREAT!
IT'S PROBABLY RESTING, TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE OF ITS JOINT ARTICULATIONS.
WE'LL SEARCH A 3,000-YARD RADIUS AROUND THE POINT WHERE ITS TRAIL VANISHED. WE BETTER DISABLE IT BEFORE THE NEXT RUSH HOUR, IF WE CAN.
ALL RIGHT, MATTHEW--GIVE ME A RUNDOWN ON THE M-77.
THE M-77 IS AN ANTI-TANK ROBOT. IT'S NOT DESIGNED TO TAKE ON INFANTRY.
Uhmh
BUT IT IS PROGRAMMED TO FIGHT THE MAGG.

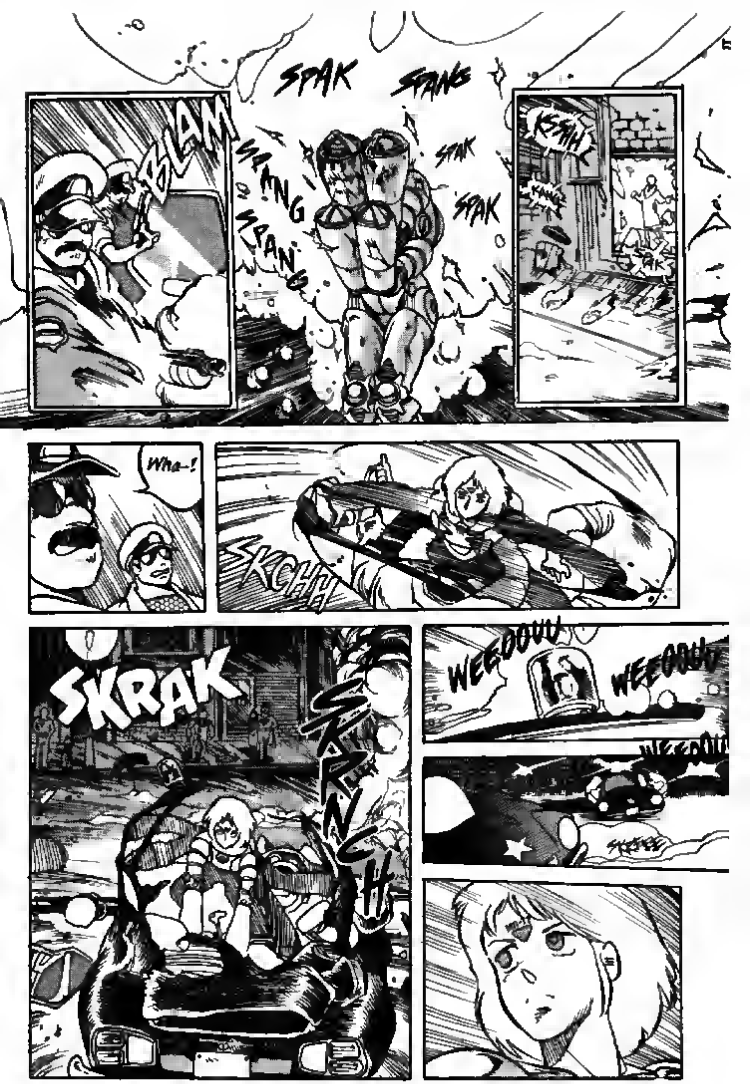
ITS SENSOR SUITE IS FAR MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN PREVIOUS MODELS-- ESSENTIALLY IT HAS COMPOSITE PERCEPTION.
IT'S GOT EVERY KIND OF ECM AND SENSOR WE COULD JAM INTO THE CASING. IT CAN EVEN DETECT ANOMOLIES IN THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD

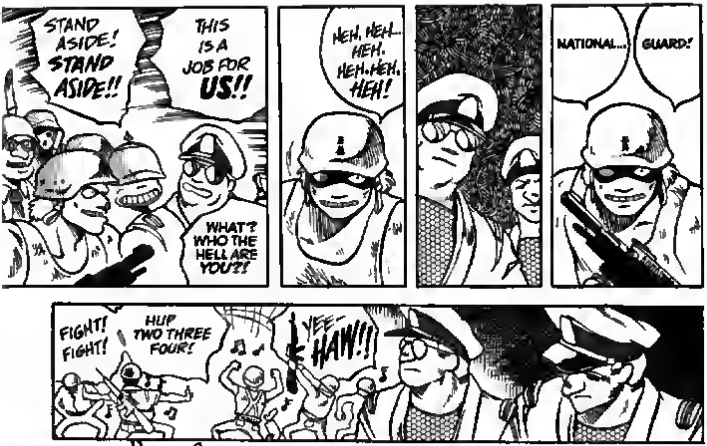

UNLIKE THE 66, IT CAN MAKE DECISIONS. AND IT TRACKS MOVING OBJECTS JUST LIKE AN ANIMAL.
PLUS, ITS BATTLEPOWER COEFFICIENT IS 30% GREATER THAN THE M66, OPERATING SPEED IS 20% FASTER, AND WEIGHT 10% LIGHTER
HOWEVER, IT HAS A LOT OF JOINTS, AND THE HEAT TRANSFER FROM THE REACTOR TENDS TO KEEP THE OPERATING TEMPERATURE HIGH. THE MA.77 IS PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY HEAT.

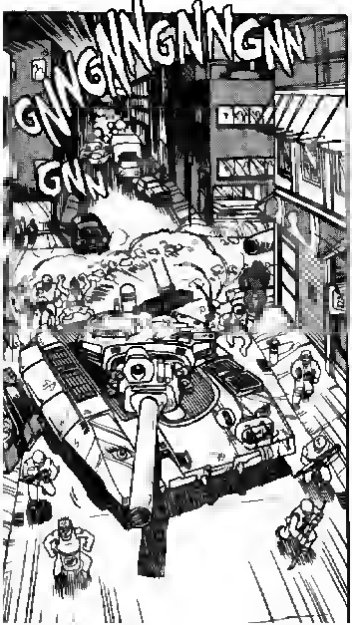

WHEN ITS BED WAS DESTROYED, THE 77 WAS UNDER A RETURN-TO-BLOCK COMMAND, WHICH IS WHY IT MOVED SO FAST. BUT NOW IT'S SWITCHED TO RECON MODE
THAT MAKES IT MORE RECEPTIVE TO NEW DATA. BUT UNTIL IT MAKES A DECISION TO ATTACK, IT'LL MOVE AT REDUCED SPEED.

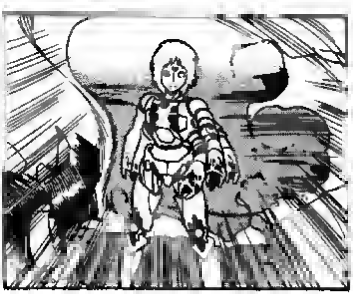

ALL RIGHT. MEMORIZE EVERY ITEM OF AVAILABLE DATA.
I'LL BEGIN THE ATTACK BRIEFING IN FIVE MINUTES.


BKOOM
NEAR THE EDGE OF TOWN ON LON JUNETZ STREET.
WEEOOUUU WEEOOUUU
KLIK
KLIK


SPAK
SPANG
SLAM
SPANG
SPANG
SPAK
SPAK
KRAK
KRAK
SPAK
Wha-!
SKCHA!
SKRAK
SRNCH
WEEOOUU
WEEOOUU

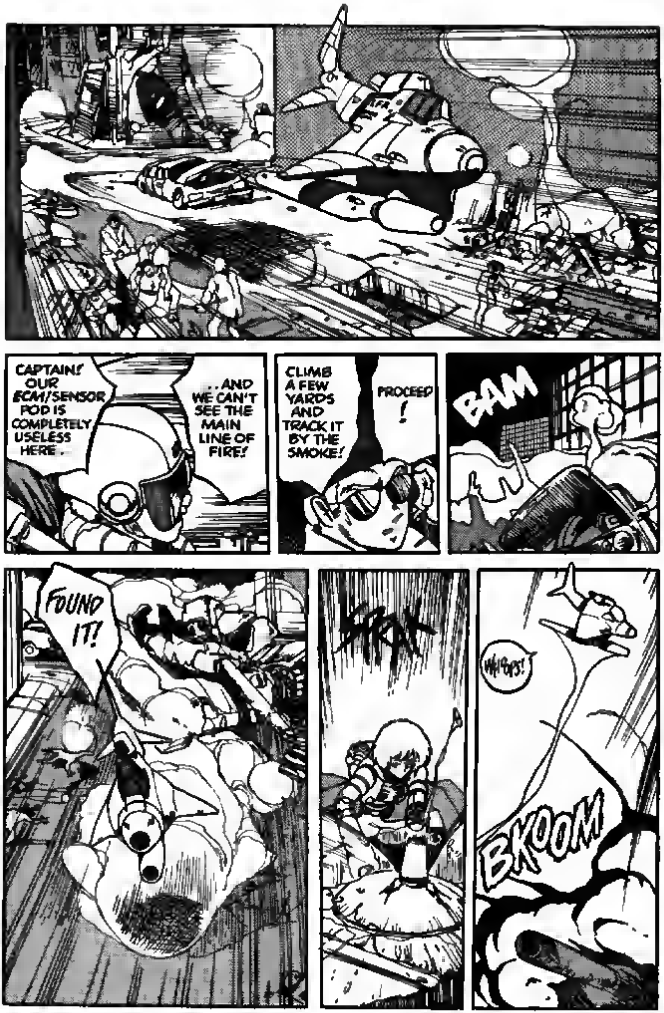

STAND ASIDE! STAND ASIDE!!
THIS IS A JOB FOR US!!
WHAT? WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
HEH, HEH.. HEH. HEH.HEH. HEH!
NATIONAL...
GUARD!
FIGHT! FIGHT!
HUP TWO THREE FOUR!
YEE- HAW!!

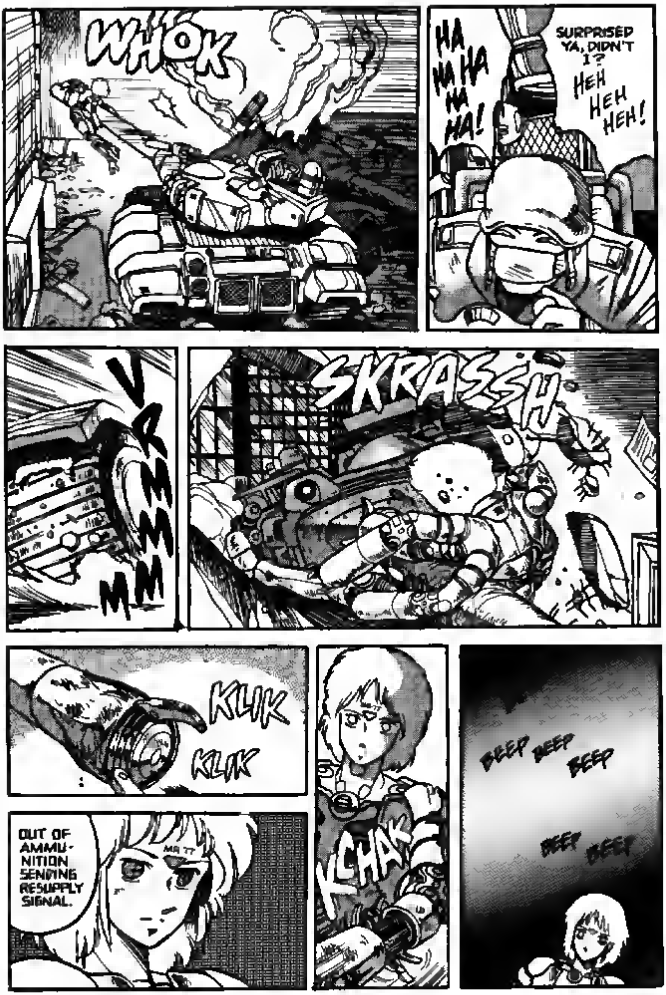

GNNGNNGNNGNN
GNN



NO, NO, YOU IDIOT! I GET TO SHOOT IT!
DOOBE KABAAAM!!!
KNUCKLEHEAD! ALL YOU'RE QUALIFIED TO DO IS LOAD!
NO, WHAT THIS REQUIRES IS SOMEONE CAUTIOUS AND RELIABLE. LIKE ME...
HO HO HO HO! ME! I'M THE GUNNER! I GET TO FIRE IT!
WHAM
BOOM
WRAM
YOU MEATHEAD! AIM FIRST! FIRE SECOND!!
WHERE IS THE TARGET, ANYWAY...?
AW, SHADDAP! IF WE KEEP FIRING, WE'LL HIT IT EVENTUALLY!!
SPAKOOM

THE NATIONAL GUARD IS OUT THERE...??
THAT'S RATHER UNFORTUNATE...
JUST LOOK AT THAT, FOLKS! IT'S A REAL BATTLE! IS THIS AN INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE? OR, PERHAPS ANOTHER SURVIVALIST GROUP GONE MAD?
WE REPEAT, THIS IS NOT A DRAMATIZATION! A REAL BATTLE IS TAKING PLACE NOW IN--
Uh-oh


CAPTAIN! OUR BCAI/SENSOR POD IS COMPLETELY USELESS HERE.
..AND WE CAN'T SEE THE MAIN LINE OF FIRE!
CLIMB A FEW YARDS AND TRACK IT BY THE SMOKE!
PROCEED!
BAM
FOUND IT!
BRAK
WHOOPS!
BKOOM


WHOK
HA HA HA HA HA!
SURPRISED YA, DIDN'T I? HEH HEH HEH!
VRMMMM
SKRASSH
KLIK KLIK
KCHAK
BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
OUT OF AMMUNITION SENDING RESUPPLY SIGNAL.

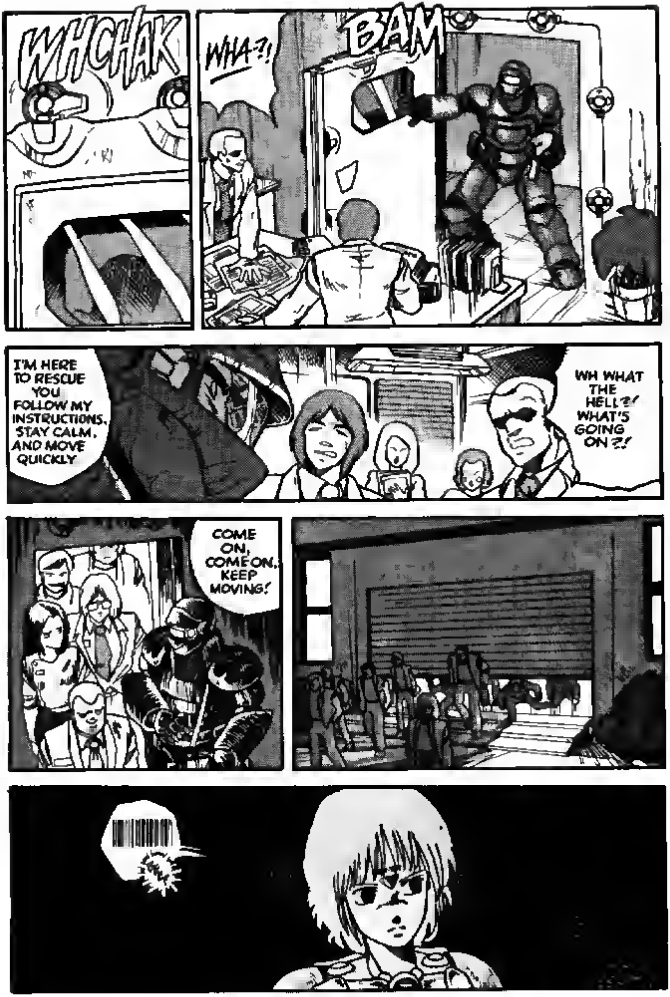
KSHHH
KSHHH
HEY!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU IDIOTS DOING?!
POLICE, huh? PULL 'EM OUTTA THERE
YES, SIR!
IF IT'S INSIDE THE BUILDING, IT'LL BE EASIER TO TAKE OUT. WE'RE CHANGING TACTICS. OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS NOW CONTAINMENT.
HOW MANY PROTECTOR SUITS DO WE HAVE, GEORGIO?
JUST TWO
THAT'S THE LAST THING I THOUGHT WE'D BE USING IN THIS OP, CAPTAIN.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. ROGER, BLAU, YOU PUT ON THE SUITS.
CEASCEU, YOU SEIZE THE CONTROL ROOM. SEAL OFF THE BUILDING AND STAND BY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.
NO RESPONSE. RESUPPLY UNAVAILABLE. ENEMY NUMBER: UNKNOWN. NEED EXTRACTION.

THAT'S ONE CLEVER ROBOT, HOLING UP IN THE INTERSTELLAR IMMIGRATION BUILDING LIKE THAT...
YEAH. NO SHIT.
CAPTAIN! HQ SAYS MORE THAN HALF THE EMPLOYEES ARE STILL IN THE BUILDING.
TELL CEASCEU TO LOWER THE FIREWALLS.
THE '77 ISN'T EVEN GOING TO NOTICE A FIREWALL!
I JUST WANT TO LOCATE THE UNIT. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF TRYING TO TRAP IT.
PLUS, IT'LL HELP KEEP THE EMPLOYEES FROM COMING INTO CONTACT WITH THE MA'77
FIRE-WALLS CLOSED, CAPTAIN.
GOOD.
IT'S ON THE THIRD FLOOR NOW, BREAKING THROUGH THE FIRE-WALL IN THE STAIR-WELL.
HHH

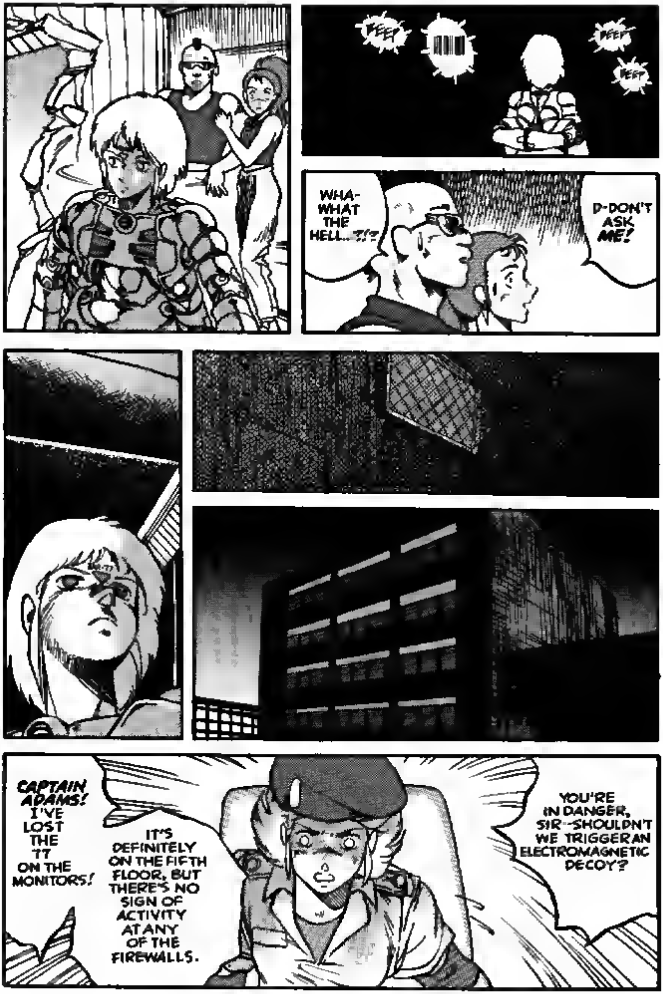
ALL RIGHT, CEASCEU - TURN THE HEATING ON FULL BLAST. ALL FLOORS. BE CAREFUL NOT TO BLOW ANY FUSES
THREE OF US ARE GOING INSIDE NOW, SO OPEN THE FRONT ENTRANCE.
HAVE LIEUTENANT ISAH COME HERE WITH DELTA ONE* IF THE THREE OF US BUY IT, HAVE HIM ASSUME COMMAND AND SEND IN DELTA.
OKAY ... NOW CUT OFF ALL LIGHTING, EVEN THE EMERGENCY FLOODS
CUTTING LIGHTS, NOW.
KLIK
FZT
WHERE IS IT NOW?
BREAKING THROUGH THE FIRE WALL ON THE STAIRS BETWEEN FLOORS THREE AND FOUR
ALL RIGHT. THIRTY SECONDS AFTER IT PENETRATES THE WALL, SWITCH ON ALL LIGHTS ON THE FOURTH FLOOR
THEN, AFTER THREE SECONDS, CUT THEM. ADAMS OUT.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO.
YES, SIR!

* DELTA ONE—A FORTRESS INFILTRATION COMBAT UNIT COMPOSED OF ONE ASSAULT TEAM AND ONE RECON TEAM

WHY'S THE CAPTAIN SWITCHING THE LIGHTS ON AND OFF?
TO OVERLOAD THE '77's OWL-EYE. THE HEATING IS TO JAM UP ITS TEMPERATURE AND SOUND SENSORS.
JEEZ, I DON'T GET IT.
CHAK
CEASCEU, TURN ON THE COOLING SYSTEM ON THE FIFTH FLOOR. KEEP THE '77 MOVING UP, AND SHUT DOWN THE VENTILATION BEHIND IT.
KEEP ALTERNATING TEMPERATURES UNTIL IT REACHES THE SEVENTH FLOOR.
WE'LL SET UP A BOOBY TRAP THERE. YOU TWO EVACUATE THE EMPLOYEES FROM THE LOWER FLOORS, ONE FLOOR AT A TIME.
WHEN THE '77 GETS TO THE SIXTH FLOOR, USE THE ELEVATOR TO BYPASS IT.
GO BACK TO THE ISHMAEL AND GET ME AN INFRARED STROBE TUNED TO A HUMAN HEAT SIGNATURE, SOME DET CORD, AND A MAG-BEAM DRIVER WITH FOUR LENSES.
I'LL SEND THE EMPLOYEES ON THE TOP THREE FLOORS UP TO THE ROOF. MOVE IT, SOLDIER!


WHCHAK
WHA-?!
BAM
I'M HERE TO RESCUE YOU. FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS, STAY CALM, AND MOVE QUICKLY.
WH WHAT THE HELL?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
COME ON, COME ON, KEEP MOVING!
BANG

SHEE-IT. THEY KEEP US WAITING FOR HOURS. AND NOW THIS...
DAMN, I HATE BUREAU-CRATS!
KANG
KANG
EEK!
SPRS
AKK
KRAK
SKNCH
EEEP

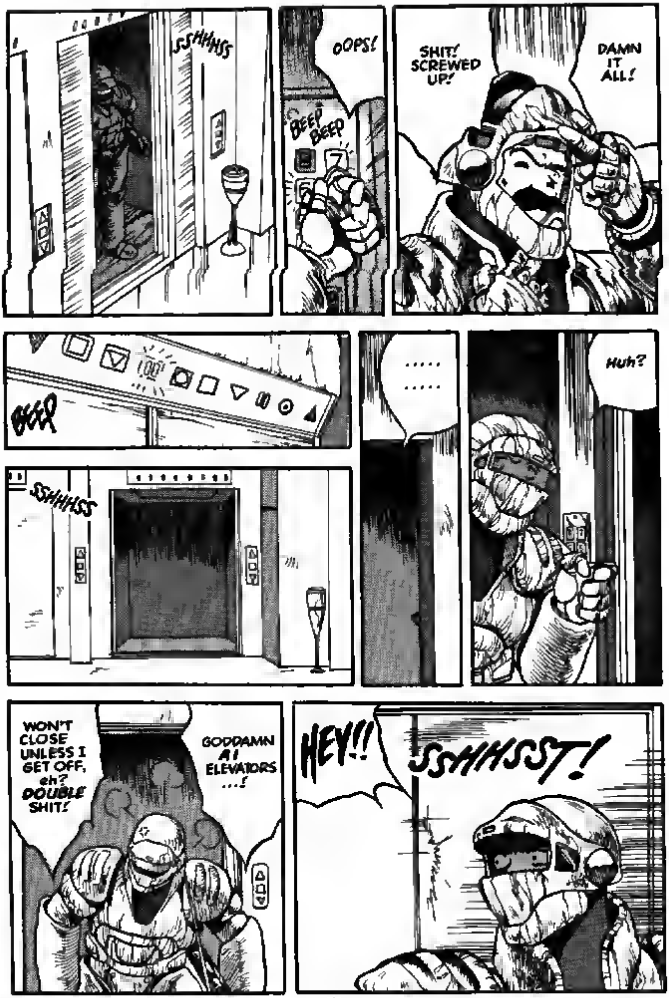

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
WHA-WHAT THE HELL...?!?
D-DON'T ASK ME!
CAPTAIN ADAMS! I'VE LOST THE TT ON THE MONITORS!
IT'S DEFINITELY ON THE FIFTH FLOOR, BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF ACTIVITY AT ANY OF THE FIREWALLS.
YOU'RE IN DANGER, SIR -SHOULDN'T WE TRIGGER AN ELECTROMAGNETIC DECOY?

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, BUT IF WE DO, THE ROBOT WILL SHIFT INTO COMBAT MODE, PLUS IT WOULD GIVE IT A CLUE AS TO WHERE TO FIND THE EXIT.
DID THEY GET THE MAG-BEAM OFF THE ISHMAEL YET?
YES, BUT...
WAIT A SEC!
THE '77 CAN ROTATE ITS SHOULDER JOINTS THROUGH 180 DEGREES. ABOVE THE FOURTH FLOOR, THE VENTILATION DUCTS WIDEN OUT-- THE '77 COULD FIT IN THEM.
CAPTAIN! FROM HERE, I CAN'T TRACK IT THROUGH THE DUCTS! WHAT SHOULD I DO?
TURN UP THE COOLING ON THE FIFTH FLOOR!
ROGER, BLAU. THE TARGET APPEARS TO HAVE MOVED INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM. BRING FLAME-THROWERS-- WE'LL FLUSH IT OUT.
HOLD OFF ON THE RESCUE FOR NOW
WHAT?!
INSERT THE MAG-BEAM PEEP CABLES FROM THE TOP!
FLAME-THROWERS?!

SORRY! WE ONLY HAVE ONE!
BLAU, COULD YOU GET BY WITH A PARTICLE BEAM GUN?
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?
STRAIGHT OUT OF SOME SF STORY READ LOTS OF 'EM WHEN I WAS A KID
...NOT THAT IT MATTERS. ANYWAY, DOUBLE TAPS ARE OKAY, BUT NO MORE.
YOU CAN ONLY USE IT IN NARROW PASSAGES, AND OUT TO ABOUT 30 FEET. DON'T USE IT WITH PEOPLE ANYWHERE INSIDE A 45-DEGREE ARC--TURNS 'EM INTO CASSEROLE.
LEAN INTO IT AFTER FIRING, OR THE SECONDARY SHOCK WAVE'LL SEND YOU FLYING--IT CREATES A VACUUM ALONG THE BEAM PATH. AND DON'T--
ALL RIGHT, I GOT IT! ENOUGH ALREADY! JEEZ!
HOW WAS MY EXPLANATION, DOC?
HRMM. I'D GIVE IT 8 OUT OF 10.
YOU KNOW... THAT GUN COULD PARALYZE THE COCKPIT ELECTRONICS OF A CLOSE-COMBAT VEHICLE, LIKE A TANK, BUT AS FOR THE T7
IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU MIGHT MELT THE FLEXOR UNITS ON ITS ENDOSKELETAL JUNCTIONS, OR THE CAMOUFLAGE MEMBRANE ON ITS FACE, BUT...

Hmmm.
GO HELP BLAU.
YES, SIR.
Huh!

HAS IT ENTERED THE CORRIDOR YET?
NOT YET, CAPTAIN!
I'VE BURNED THE ENTIRE FOURTH FLOOR VENTILATION SYSTEM AND SEALED IT OFF
VERY WELL-- PROCEED!
YES, SIR!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE SIXTH FLOOR, BLAU
OKAY!
I'VE GOT THE FIFTH FLOOR
COMMENCING MY SWEEP NOW!
FZZAK
BEEP
FWOOSH
WHOOO! DAMN THING REALLY WORKS!
BKOOM

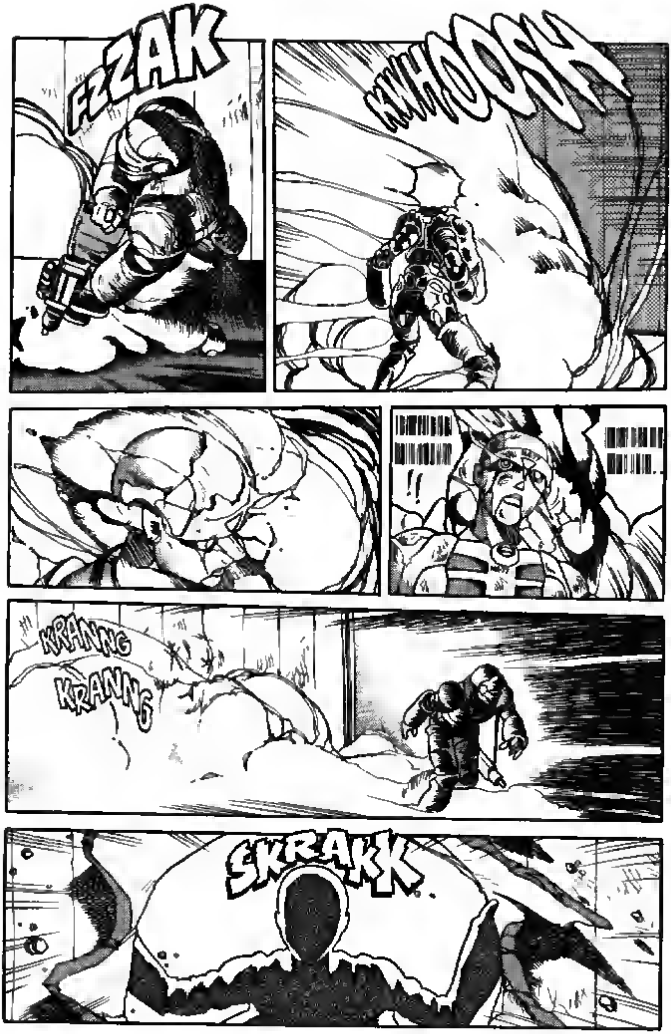

SSHHHSS
OOPS!
BEEP BEEP
SHIT! SCREWED UP!
DAMN IT ALL!
BEEP
.....
.....
Huh?
SSHHHSS
WON'T CLOSE UNLESS I GET OFF, eh? DOUBLE SHIT!
GODDAMN AI ELEVATORS ...!
HEY!!
SSHHSST!

SON OF A BITCH!!
BANG
HEY, ROGER..?
KIK
YEAH, WHAT?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE SIXTH FLOOR, TOO. I GOT OFF HERE BY MISTAKE.
CHAK
GO AHEAD AND STAND GUARD WITH THE CAPTAIN, OKAY?
GOTCHA. STAY FROSTY, BLAU.
KIK
THIS PROTECTOR SUIT'S REALLY A HASSLE AT TIMES LIKE THIS...
DAMN ELEVATORS... DAMN SUITS...
SO I HAVE TO BURN IT OUT ALL BY MYSELF, AFTER ALL... JUST MY GODDAMN LUCK...
?!

YAAAH!
WHSSHH
WHOO
SPLKK
FWDD
SHEE-
IT!!

AAAA!!
KSH!
KSH!
KSH!
KSH!
KSHHH
KSH!
KSH!
CAPTAIN! COME IN, CAPTAIN!!
I HEAR YOU! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
KANG
KANG
KANG
KANG
KANG
KANG
KANG
IT--IT'S HERE! RIGHT BEHIND ME!
?!
HEAD UP HERE! DON'T GO DOWN! UNDERSTAND?
I'LL HAVE CEASCEU OPEN THE FIRE-WALL!
AND DON'T GO UP TO EIGHT!
KANG
BEEP
KSHHHHH KSHHHHH KSHHHHH KSHHHHH

HURRY! HURRY!
KA-KA-KA-

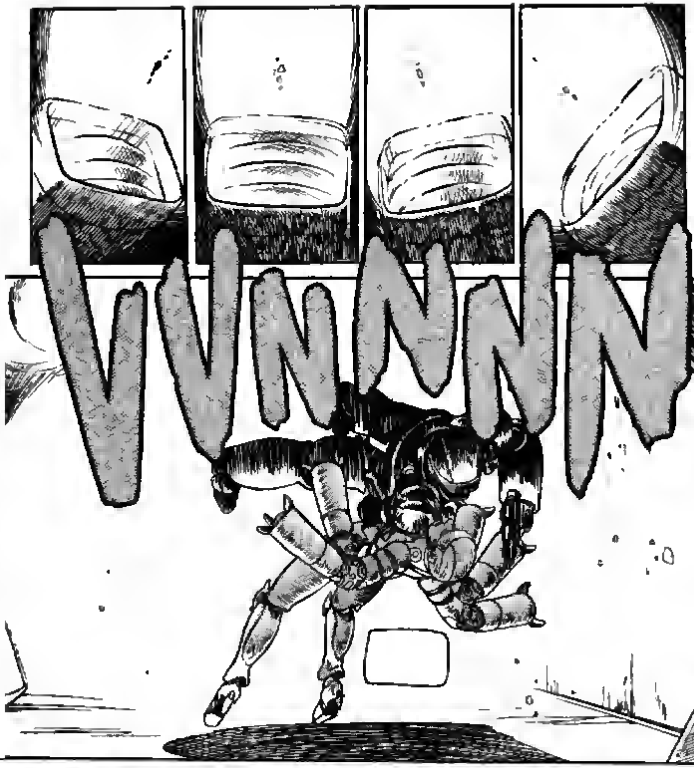

FFZAK
WHOOSH
!!
KRAK'NG
KRAK'NG
SKRAKK

*FIRES A HIGH EXPLOSIVE ARMOR-PIERCING SHELL DETONATED BY A DELAYED-CONTACT FUSE.

BK
OM
Huh!
BLAU, GET IT TO FOLLOW YOU!
ROGER! GIVE ME YOUR PROTECTOR SUIT, QUICK!
KI'K
YES, SIR!
LET ME KNOW IF IT APPROACHES CLOSER THAN FIFTEEN FEET.

CAPTAIN !
KLIK
YOU TWO FALL BACK
IT ONLY HOLDS TWO SHOTS
KCHAK
BEEP!
WHOOSH
AH-

IT'S MOVING SLOW...?!
WHSSH
WHST
I'M IN LUCK!
ITS FLEXOR CARTILAGE UNITS MUST HAVE MELTED!
WHSSH
KANGG
KRAK
KRAK
OOF!
WHUV
FEE


VVNNNN

KSHH
KSHH

WHAM!
WHAM!
WHAM!

SKRRKK
SKRRK
SKRAK
BKOOM
BKOOM

CAPTAIN!!
CAPTAIN ...?!
FMP
GOT... A CIGAR...?
CAPTAIN ADAMS!!
RELAX, I'M OKAY. JUST CAN'T MOVE.
I GOT BROKEN RIBS MAYBE THREE... heh heh...
Whew!!

CAPTAIN!!
ARTHUR!
DON'T TELL JUDY, CEASCEU! NO NEED FOR HER TO WORRY
BUT CAPTAIN...?
DOC, GET OVER HERE!!
RIBS, HUH. JUST HAVE A FEW DRINKS, GET SOME SLEEP, AND YOU'LL BE FINE. WASTE OF MY TALENTS! HMPH!
YEAH, PROBABLY... HEY, DOC-- QUIT ROCKING THE (OUCH!) CHAIR!
CAPTAIN...
WHAT IS IT, SOLDIER?
OH, RIGHT-- THANKS FOR YOUR HELP.

Uhing...
IS THAT ALL.
SIR! YOU HAVE MY GREATEST RESPECT AND ADMIRATION, CAP'N, SIR!
WITHOUT EVEN USING DELTA UNIT, YOU DESTROYED A ROBOT THAT IS THE COMBAT EQUAL OF AN ENTIRE HEAVY TANK PLATOON.
YOU'RE SOMETHIN' ELSE, CAPTAIN ADAMS!
LOOK, YOU'RE A SOLDIER, TOO.
THIS IS A CHANCE FOR YOU TO GET SOMETHING INTO YOUR THICK HEAD ONCE AND FOR ALL. SO LISTEN UP!!!
WITHIN A GIVEN SCIENTIFIC REALM, THE RELATIVE FIGHTING STRENGTH OF TWO OPPOSING UNITS HAS NO BEARING ON THE RESULTS OF THE ACTUAL BATTLE.
YOU MEAN THAT IF YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK, YOU CAN DEFEAT ANY OPPONENT?
KATAKATAKATAKA
A ROBOT WITH NO FIREPOWER AND ITS JOINTS MELTED IS JUST A LUMP OF METAL -- YOU DAMN WELL *BETTER* BE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT!
YOU FOLLOW ME, GEORGIO?
THERE'S A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TOOL AND THE USER.
.....
.....

IT'S MY PERSONAL OPINION THAT SCIENCE IS JUST A TOOL. IT CAN'T TRANSCEND ITS HUMAN CREATORS.
SOMETHING THAT IS A PRODUCT OF KNOWLEDGE CAN ALWAYS BE CONTROLLED WITH THE USE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO PRODUCE A WEAPON THAT SURPASSES HUMANS IN ALL WAYS.
ARE YOU CAPTAIN ADAMS? WHAT'S THE STORY ON THIS INCIDENT?
TELL US WHAT HAPPENED!
NO COMMENT!
THE CAPTAIN'S IN NO SHAPE TO TALK TO YOU BUNCHA HYENAS!
CAPTAIN! WHAT WAS THE ARMY DOING HERE?
WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE IN THE INCIDENT?
FACE THIS WAY, PLEASE! THIS WAY, CAPTAIN!
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
DO YOU HAVE ANY--

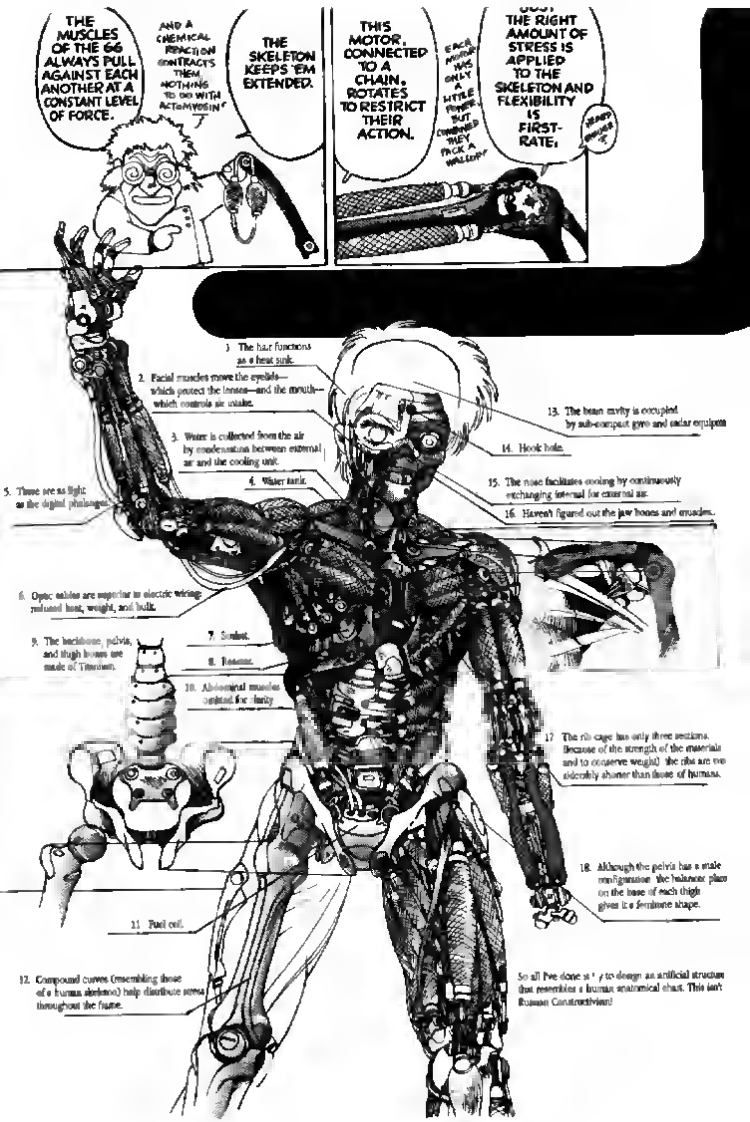
BOOBY TRAP
EMP

APPENDIX A

by Masamune Shirow

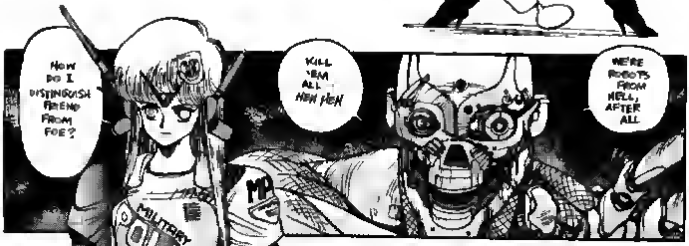
M66-6

Black Magic premiered in February 1983 in a small magazine published by the Manga Research Group Atlas. *Black Magic*'s rather old fashioned graphic style makes me a little embarrassed to see it reissued now. Nonetheless, I'd like to take a new look at the Marionette 66 combat robot.


THE MUSCLES OF THE 66 ALWAYS PULL AGAINST EACH ANOTHER AT A CONSTANT LEVEL OF FORCE.
AND A CHEMICAL REACTION CONTRACTS THEM. NOTHING TO DO WITH ACTOMYOSIN.
THE SKELETON KEEPS 'EM EXTENDED.
THIS MOTOR, CONNECTED TO A CHAIN, ROTATES TO RESTRICT THEIR ACTION.
EACH MOTOR HAS ONLY A LITTLE POWER, BUT COMBINED THEY PACK A WALLOP!
THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF STRESS IS APPLIED TO THE SKELETON AND FLEXIBILITY IS FIRST-RATE.
READY WHEN YOU ARE.
1. The hair functions as a heat sink.
2. Facial muscles move the eyelids—which protect the lenses—and the mouth—which controls air intake.
3. Water is collected from the air by condensation between external air and the cooling unit.
4. Water tank.
5. Those are as light as the digital phalanges.
6. Optic cables are superior to electric wiring: reduced heat, weight, and bulk.
7. Sonbot.
8. Rosanna.
9. The backbone, pelvis, and thigh bones are made of Titanium.
10. Abdominal muscles optional for lady.
11. Fuel cell.
12. Compound curves (resembling those of a human skeleton) help distribute stress throughout the frame.
13. The brain cavity is occupied by sub-compact gyro and radar equipment.
14. Hook bolts.
15. The nose facilitates cooling by continuously exchanging internal for external air.
16. Haven't figured out the jaw bones and muscles.
17. The rib cage has only three sections. Because of the strength of the materials and to conserve weight, the ribs are two sidewalks shorter than those of humans.
18. Although the pelvis has a male configuration, the balancer plate on the base of each thigh gives it a feminine shape.
So all I've done is try to design an artificial structure that resembles a human anatomical chart. This isn't Russian Constructivism!

Since this is a bioroid-level civilization (what ever that means!), let's suppose that biotechnology permits production of robots that otherwise would be prohibitively expensive and impossibly difficult to repair or fine-tune if made of purely mechanical parts. Since the goal is not an exact copy of a human (bioroids are for military purposes, after all), photoelectronics and limited bio-brain applications provide optimum movement and spatial perception. The result is a "killer robot." But since this robot is no more than a byproduct of the human race, and is not recognized as an independent species, Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics" do not apply

THE INCLUSION OF A PAVLOVIAN FEEDBACK SYSTEM ENSURES THAT, IF IT ATTACKS ITS MASTER, IT WILL EXPERIENCE ARTIFICIAL PAIN
OF COURSE, IF IT DECIDES IT LIKES PAIN...
Yikes!



Take the jungles of Panama, with their 100-degree temperatures, 90 percent humidity, and torrential rains. The M 66 must be able to operate in this severe environment as well as in deserts, glaciers, swamps, water.. You name it.

In short, an all-weather robot. This means there are likely to be as many different models as there are military operations. And not only humanoid, either: trees, rocks, animals are all possible variants.

...concluded next issue...

THE COMBAT CYBORG BIOROID (A CYBORG WITH GREATER OVER-ALL POWER THAN ITS NON-BIOROID PROTOTYPE) IS SIMILAR TO THE 66.
THEY DIFFER IN THAT THE CYBORG HAS THE SAME BRAIN AS A HUMAN, WHILE THE 66 HAS A LIMITED BRAIN COUPLED WITH PHOTOELECTRONIC DEVICES. EACH HAS ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES.

Millennia ago, human life existed only on Venus, under the command of supercomputer Nemesis, which generated an elite "Executor" class of bioroids to defend the Venusian Federation. In time, the Executors dwindled—but their most successful comrade, Zeus, became the Federation's civilian ruler. Though further bioroid production was banned, Nemesis secretly created a final Executor—Typhon—and raised her hidden among the civilian population...

Now Typhon struggles toward realization of her twin goals: deposing the tyrannical Zeus and disconnecting the increasingly unpredictable and dangerous Nemesis. Typhon directly challenges Zeus with citywide deployment of M-66 combat robots—and Zeus responds in kind, unleashing his more advanced M-77 squad. But Typhon wins control of the M-77, keeping Zeus on the defensive as the battle moves through the city...

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STUDIO PROTEUS

Book Four of Four

Black Magic Chapter Three:

CITY LIGHT

BLACK MAGIC

by Masamune Shirow

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Edited by Greg S. Baisden

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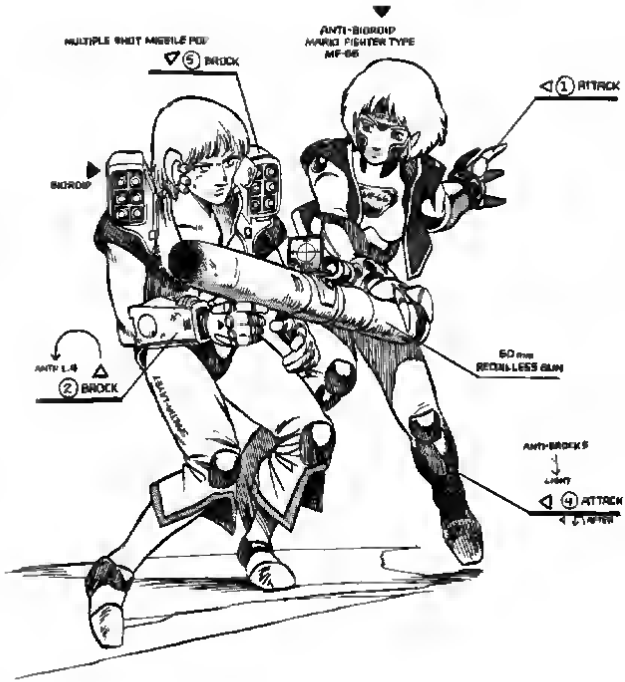
In this English edition of Black Magic, the artwork has been reversed
to read left-to-right for the American audience.


ANTI-BIOROID
MARIO FIGHTER TYPE
MF-05
MULTIPLE SHOT MISSILE POD
5 BROCK
1 ATTACK
BIOROID
50 mm
RECOILLESS GUN
ANTI L-9
2 BROCK
ANTI-BROCK 5
4 ATTACK

AT THIS TIME, THE VENUSIAN CIVILIZATION ENCOMPASSED FIVE PLANETS, SEVERAL COLONIES, AND COUNTLESS SPACELABS.

AT THE OUTER EDGE OF THIS CIVILIZATION--THE SATURNIAN MOON NAMED TITAN--A FLEET OF EMIGRANT SHIPS PREPARED TO DEPART IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PROJECT LAUNCHED BY ZEUS.

THIS SCHEDULE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, EITHER. IT'S TOO RUSHED, WITH ALL THOSE DEPARTURES IN QUICK SUCCESSION.
YEAH, TYPHON SAYS THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT IT MAYBE SO, HUH?

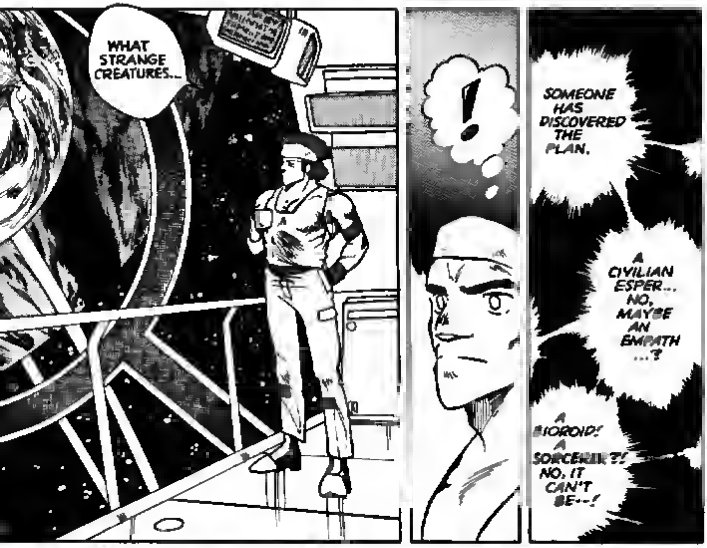
THE WHOLE THING IS BEING DONE IN A REAL HALF-ASSED WAY
SAY... YOU COULD PROBABLY CARE LESS ABOUT THIS, BUT...
...IT SEEMS LIKE TYPHON PREFERS YASHA'S COMPANY TO MINE
Heh Heh. COME ON, DON'T GRIPE JUST BECAUSE YOU GOT LEFT BEHIND.
THAT REMINDS ME.. THEY SHOULD BE LIFTING OFF ANYTIME NOW, RIGHT?
YOU WANT TO WATCH IT ON THE 3V?
NAH, NOT REALLY.
POLITICS IS TOO DAMNED COMPLI-CATED.
AND I HATE COMPLICATED THINGS. I SURELY DO.

"THE S.S. PROCRUSTES HERE..."
...WILL BE ACCELERATING PRIMARILY WITH THE INTERSTELLAR RAMJET DRIVE, BUT WE'LL USE SATURN'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL TO GIVE US OUR INITIAL VELOCITY.
WHEN WE COME OUT OF OUR SATURN FLY-BY, WE'LL ARC AROUND TITAN TO LINE US UP WITH OUR FLIGHT WINDOW OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.
KLIK
RIGHT, CAPTAIN?
YES, YES.
BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT..
...TAKE A LOOK AT THIS VIEW, HERMES.
FEELING SENTI-MENTAL AGAIN?

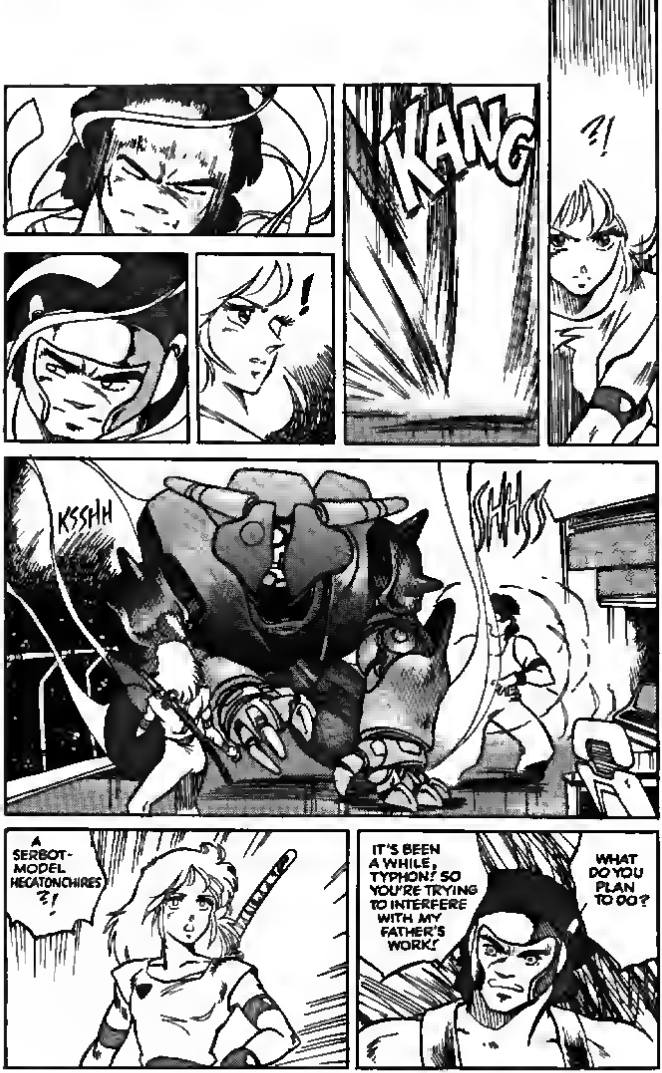
NOT EXACTLY. LOOK AT ALL THOSE CITY LIGHTS... TITAN IS ABSOLUTELY TEEMING WITH PEOPLE.
IT TURNS MY STOMACH.
YEAH, YEAH-- YOU THINK HUMANS SHOULD LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE, AND ALL THAT CRAP..
RIGHT, CAPTAIN ?
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO EXPECT SYMPATHY FROM YOU. I'LL BE IN MY CABIN.
!
HI, THERE!

YOU'RE THE CAPTAIN, RIGHT?
AND WHO ARE YOU?
OH, JUST A PASSENGER.
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.
ABOUT WHAT?
COMMISSIONER HERMES.
YOU SEE, HE'S A SPY.
LISTEN... EITHER CHANGE COURSE TO A MORE PERIPHERAL TRAJECTORY...
...OR SKIP THE FLY-BY ALTOGETHER OTHERWISE, EVERYONE ON BOARD WILL DIE.
W-WAIT! YOU CAN'T JUST EXPECT ME TO... I MEAN, WITHOUT PROOF..
I FIGURED THAT'S WHAT YOU'D SAY, SO I ALLOWED THIRTY MINUTES FOR YOU TO DECIDE...
.....
.....!

NOW, NOW. AT YOUR AGE, YOU SHOULDN'T KID YOUR ELDERS LIKE THAT...DON'T YOU THINK? HA HA
WSSHH
Hmph!
YOU'RE PRETTY YOUNG YOURSELF... DO YOU PLAN TO DIE WITHOUT CHECKING TO SEE IF I'M RIGHT?
ONLY 29 MINUTES LEFT...
NOW YOU'RE MAKING ME MAD! I'M A BUSY MAN, GIRL!
I'VE NO TIME FOR STUPID JOKES.
THERE'S PROOF
WANNA SEE?
ALL RIGHT, THEN-- LET'S GO.
AT-46
GUARDS!
MY, YOU'RE A CAUTIOUS FELLOW.
I MAY BE YOUNG, BUT I'M THE CAPTAIN, AND I BELIEVE I KNOW HOW TO DO MY JOB...
OKAY, OKAY...!
JUST DON'T LET HERMES KNOW.
LET'S BE DISCREET ABOUT THIS, hmm?


WHAT STRANGE CREATURES...
!
SOMEONE HAS DISCOVERED THE PLAN.
A CIVILIAN ESPER... NO, MAYBE AN EMPATH ...?
A BIOROID! A SORCERER?! NO, IT CAN'T BE--!

WHAT THE--!?
?!!
YAAHH !!
Oh, YES INDEED, HERMES!
TYPHON'S FAVORITE MAGIC, REMEMBER ?


KANG
?!
!
KSSHH
SHHH
A SERBOT-MODEL HECATONCHIRES
?!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, TYPHON! SO YOU'RE TRYING TO INTERFERE WITH MY FATHER'S WORK!
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

A BRAT LIKE YOU HAS NO BUSINESS ASKING SUCH QUESTIONS.
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH THAT BLACK MONSTER?
KSSHHH
YOU ONLY HAVE ONE LIFE TO LOSE.
BETTER QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD!
THIS SERBOT'S A SPECIAL MODEL... STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT A SORCERER!
EVEN ONE LIKE YOU, TYPHON!!

KOOM
ZZKK
!
KANG
WHST

WHOOM
WHA--
HAH!

DAMN IT! SHE MUST'VE MADE A REFLEX JUMP JUST BEFORE SHE BLACKED OUT.
THERE GOES MY BIG CHANCE!
WHERE IS SHE?!
OWWW.. THAT HURTS
HM?!
JUST A LOUSY ELECTRIC SHOCK.. BUT I CAN FEEL IT RIGHT IN MY SPINE
OWWW.. IT STILL STINGS..
Uhhh..
WHAT IF IT RUINS MY SEX LIFE? THAT LITTLE BASTARD....!
NOW I'M REALLY MAD!!

WAIT A SEC--DID IT DELIVER THAT SHOCK ON ITS OWN.. ?
A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS SERBOT, eh? THAT DAMN ZEUS! ANOTHER NASTY TOY
!
VZZZZZZZT
HAH!
NOT SO FAST, MY BOY!
Uh-oh!

SON OF A B--
KANGG
:uff!:
GHOK
!
GHOK
WRAM
HNGG!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
JEEZUZ!
KANG

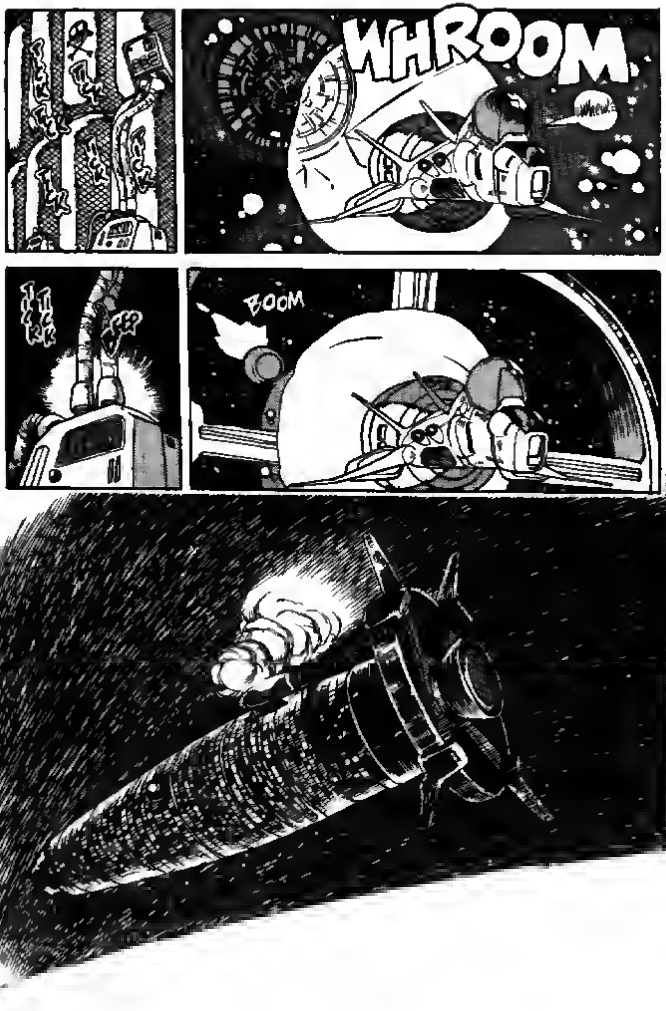
THAT LITTLE COWARD! Oh, WELL... IT'S NEARLY TIME, ANYWAY.
SHAA
BESIDES, I WOULDN'T WANT TO WASTE MY SWORD ON THE LIKES OF HIM
MMM
Hmm?!
WHAT'S THIS? STILL TRYING TO MOVE?
THAT'S KIND OF CUTE, ACTUALLY.
Hm?
ZZZVVKK!
!
SSSHHSS
BEEP!
W... WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW...
YOU REALLY ARE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS..

CENTRAL CONTROL ROOM
THESE SENSITIVITY MEASUREMENTS COST MONEY, SO BE AS QUICK AS YOU CAN!
OKAY, OKAY.
FIND ANYTHING?
NOT YET!
THAT KID CLAIMS THERE'S SOME TRICK DEVICE IN THE HARDWARE. JEEZ...
FIGURES OUR FIRST JOB'D BE A BUG HUNT!
WAIT!
WHAT IS IT?
FIND SOME FREEZE-DRIED COCK-ROACHES?
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BOARD!
SEEMS LIKE IT'S RIGGED UP TO COLLECT DATA FROM ALL ON-BOARD INSTRUMENTATION-- BUT IT'S NOT MICROCIRCUITRY!
IT'S SOME KIND OF METAL PLATE SEALED IN RESIN...
!

WELL, CAPTAIN? BELIEVE ME NOW?
WAIT UNTIL IT'S ANALYZED.
FINE, FINE! YOU'VE GOT TWELVE WHOLE MINUTES.
ANALYZE IT, AND REPORT TO ME IN TEN.
UNDER-STAND?
WELL, THEN...
YES?
WHO ARE YOU, AND HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
LET'S JUST SAY THIS SHIP IS CARRYING MORE PASSENGERS THAN OFFICIALLY REPORTED AND FEWER SUPPLIES AND FOOD SOURCES THAN REPORTED...
...WHICH A CERTAIN WOMAN WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PUBLIC, IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT ZEUS' DOWNFALL.
THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU.
THERE ARE NO WOMEN REGISTERED ON OUR EMPATH LIST, AND THERE AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE ANY ESPERS ON BOARD
TERROR-ISTS...? NO, WAIT...
THE STAFF RUNNING THIS SHIP ANSWERS DIRECTLY TO ZEUS' GOVERN-MENT...
WHETHER OR NOT THE STAFF INCLUDES TERRORISTS OR SABOTEURS IS SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT LATER...
...AFTER YOU GET THIS SHIP SAFELY AROUND SATURN.

:HFF:
:HFF:
:HFF:
..SO I SEE THIS HIGH-SPEED MINIBOAT THAT'S NOT LISTED IN THE CATALOG. SEE ..
...AND I FIGURE IT'S GOTTA BE A RAMJET
IT'S GOT THE WINGS, THE GUAGES...
?
OUTTA MY WAY!
KRAK
HRKK!
THIRTY SECONDS TO GO ..

BEEP
BEEP
KLIK
VREEEE
C'MON, C'MON ....!
HURRY UP AND REACH DRIVE POWER ....!


WHROOM
BOOM

WHKOOOOMMM
!
BRIDGE, IT'S ME. WHAT WAS THAT?!
IT'S, er, uh...
THE BOTTOM LEVEL OF THE BRIDGE POD EXPLODED?! WHAT'S THE DAMAGE TO THE SHIP?
DO YOU KNOW?!
WOULD YOU SHUT UP OVER THERE! I CAN'T HEAR!!
WHAT?!
SORRY, CAPTAIN-- WE LOST THE MONITORS!
!
CAPTAIN! WE'RE OFF COURSE!
!

WHAT ABOUT THE SPS*?
WE CAN'T USE IT UNTIL THE RAMJET HAS FIRED!
YOU MEAN WE'LL JUST PLUNGE INTO SATURN?!
AND YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING?
THAT...
...THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.
*SERVICE PROPULSION SYSTEM, CONSISTING OF ORBITAL CORRECTION ROCKETS

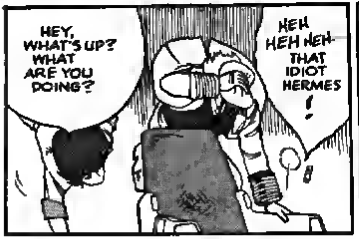
THIS MAY JUST BE COINCI-DENCE, BUT...
..WE WERE TRACKING TWO SUSPICIOUS PERSONS BY MONITOR...
...WHEN COMMIS-SIONER HERMES SHOWED UP, AND-- WELL, TAKE A LOOK.
VIDEO
.....
AND CHECK OUT THAT DOORWAY-- SEE THAT?
AN UNLISTED LIGHT BOAT.
SO NOW DO YOU BELIEVE ME?
IT'S A LITTLE LATE, OF COURSE.
H... HERMES DID THIS TO MY SHIP...?
AND, MORE TO THE POINT, ZEUS WANTS TO DO IT TO HUMANITY.
BUT WHY?!
BAM
Umm... SHOULDN'T YOU BE FIGURING OUT HOW TO SAVE US?
DAMN HIM...
WAAH! I CAN'T GO HOME!

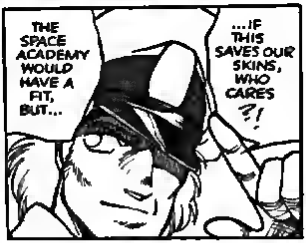
TYPHOON !!
YES?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, YASHA! TO STOP A FALLING SHIP, I'D HAVE TO LIFT IT AGAINST THE GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF AN ENTIRE PLANET!
IN THIS CASE, THAT'S THE GRAVITATIONAL ACCELERATION OF SATURN APPLIED TO THE HUGE MASS OF THIS SHIP! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW BIG SATURN IS?
DIAMETER 70,000 MILES. MASS, 111 TIMES THAT OF VENUS..
I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW MY HEIGHT AND WEIGHT, TOO.
AS A MATTER OF FACT..
IF YOU'RE SO SMART, DON'T ASK ME FOR STUPID FAVORS.
UP TO TEN TONS, I COULD PROBABLY HANDLE. BUT A COLONY SHIP? NO WAY!
CAPTAIN! WHAT IF YOU EXPLODED SOMETHING ON THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SHIP?
A MOMENT VECTOR, huh...? MIGHT BUY US SOME TIME, BUT WE STILL WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HIT ESCAPE VELOCITY..
IF ONLY WE COULD START UP THE RAM ENGINE...
DAMN IT ALL..

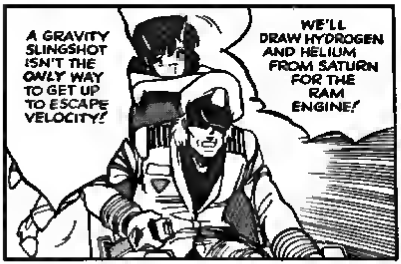
TWELVE MILLION PASSENGERS PER SHIP, FIVE SHIPS PER MISSION, FOUR LAUNCHES A YEAR... THAT'S 240 MILLION PEOPLE IN ONE YEAR...
WHAT THE HELL IS ZEUS THINKING OF? WHY--?
WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME WORRYING ABOUT THAT NOW?!
!
WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR GRAVITY?!
THE MAIN A/G UNITS ARE FAILING, CAPTAIN!
THIS IS GONNA BE ROUGH ON THE GROUNDHOGS...
KLIK
EEK!
I BET ALL THE CIVILIANS ON BOARD ARE LOSING THEIR LUNCH BY NOW..
HOW CAN YOU ALL BE SO CALM?!
BECAUSE EVEN IF WE DON'T MAKE ESCAPE VELOCITY, WE'LL JUST MOVE INTO ELLIPTICAL ORBIT AROUND SATURN. WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO BLOW UP OR ANYTHING.

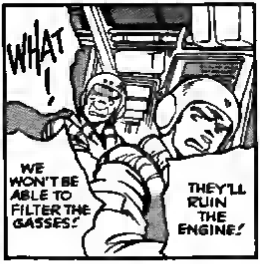
OH, YEAH... RIGHT! BUT SATURN HAS A REAL THICK ATMOSPHERE-- WON'T OUR ORBIT DECAY REALLY QUICKLY?
BRIDGE!! SWITCH IN THE INTER-STELLAR DRIVE NAVIGA-TIONAL CONTROLS!
BY GOD, WE MIGHT MAKE IT YET!!

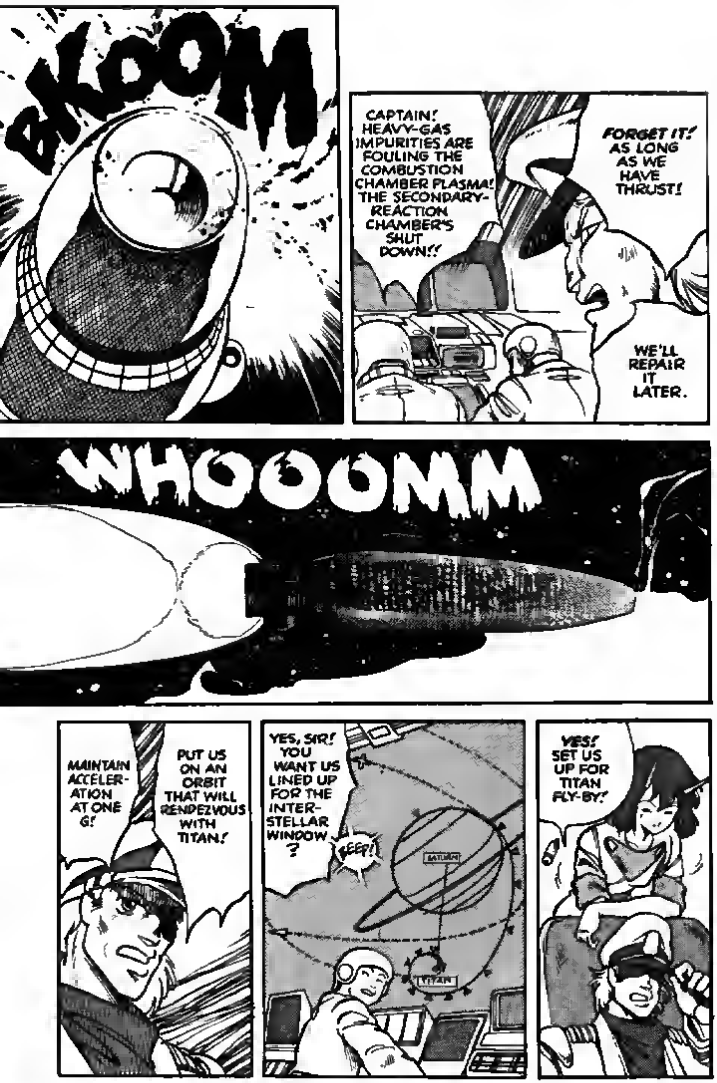
WE'RE ENTERING THE OUTER ATMOSPHERE!
POWER UP THE RAMSCOOP!
AS SOON AS THE FUSION ENGINE IGNITES, THROTTLE IT BACK TO ONE GRAVITY...
...OR WE'LL OVERSHOOT TITAN!


HEY, WHAT'S UP? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEH HEH HEH... THAT IDIOT HERMES!


THE SPACE ACADEMY WOULD HAVE A FIT, BUT...
...IF THIS SAVES OUR SKINS, WHO CARES?!


A GRAVITY SLINGSHOT ISN'T THE ONLY WAY TO GET UP TO ESCAPE VELOCITY!
WE'LL DRAW HYDROGEN AND HELIUM FROM SATURN FOR THE RAM ENGINE!


WHAT!
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO FILTER THE GASSES!
THEY'LL RUIN THE ENGINE!


BKOOM
CAPTAIN! HEAVY-GAS IMPURITIES ARE FOULING THE COMBUSTION CHAMBER PLASMA! THE SECONDARY-REACTION CHAMBER'S SHUT DOWN!!
FORGET IT! AS LONG AS WE HAVE THRUST!
WE'LL REPAIR IT LATER.
WHOOOMM
MAINTAIN ACCELER-ATION AT ONE G!
PUT US ON AN ORBIT THAT WILL RENDEZVOUS WITH TITAN!
YES, SIR! YOU WANT US LINED UP FOR THE INTER-STELLAR WINDOW?
BEEP!
SATURN
TITAN
YES! SET US UP FOR TITAN FLY-BY!

OKAY, THIS IS IT!
FULL THRUST!!
WHROOM
ALL POWER SYSTEMS ON! ACCELERATION ONE GRAVITY!
PASSING THROUGH 105,000 FEET PER SECOND... ESCAPE VELOCITY!
ALL RIGHT!!

SO WE ACTUALLY WEREN'T IN ANY DANGER AFTER ALL?!
NOT REALLY..
BUT ONLY BECAUSE WE WERE ABLE TO START UP THE RAM DRIVE.
IF WE HADN'T, WE'D BE STUCK IN SATURN ORBIT ABOUT NOW!
ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT TO GET THE WORD OUT THAT ZEUS IS PLANNING GENOCIDE FOR THE HUMAN RACE.
AND, LEAVING ASIDE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT OR NOT...
...IT'LL ALSO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL OF TOPPLING ZEUS.
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
FORGET IT.

WE'RE FLYING ON INERTIA NOW.
AT ALMOST 72,000 MILES PER HOUR... TITAN'S GROWING BIGGER BY THE MOMENT.
CITY LIGHT...
Huh?
FORGET IT...
IT WAS NOTHING...

EPILOGUE

ONIMAL
HELLO...
WOW!
TYPHON! WHAT ARE YOU ALL DRESSED UP FOR?
.....
.....
Er... SORRY! I MEAN, IT REALLY SUITS YOU...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT-- DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS, BOSS?
ABOUT ZEUS?

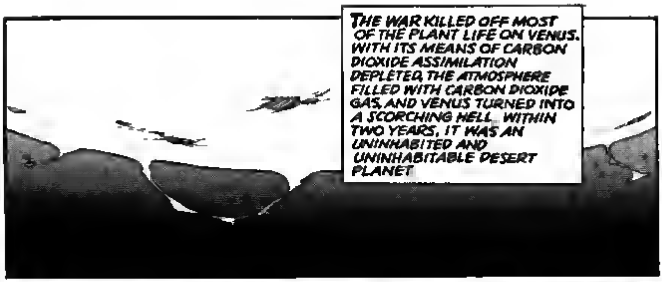
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE FINALLY FORCING HIM TO STEP DOWN!
YEAH, THE FINAL DECISION'S SUPPOSED TO COME AT THE NEXT CABINET MEETING.
THEY SAY HUMANS MAY TAKE OVER ALL THE EXECUTOR POSITIONS--EVEN REPLACING NEMESIS.
HUMANS WILL RUN THE SHOW LIKE THEY DID BEFORE NEMESIS CAME ALONG.
WHAT A STRANGE WORLD IT'S BECOME...
BIOROIDS GET THE BOOT, eh?
MAYBE THAT'S NOT A BAD THING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, BUT I DUNNO...
SHUT UP, ALL OF YOU--YOU'RE SPOILING MY DRINK...
...Y'KNOW?
TYPHON!!
ARE--ARE YOU CRYING?!!
N-NO, I...um... I JUST...
MUS' BE THE LIQUOR...

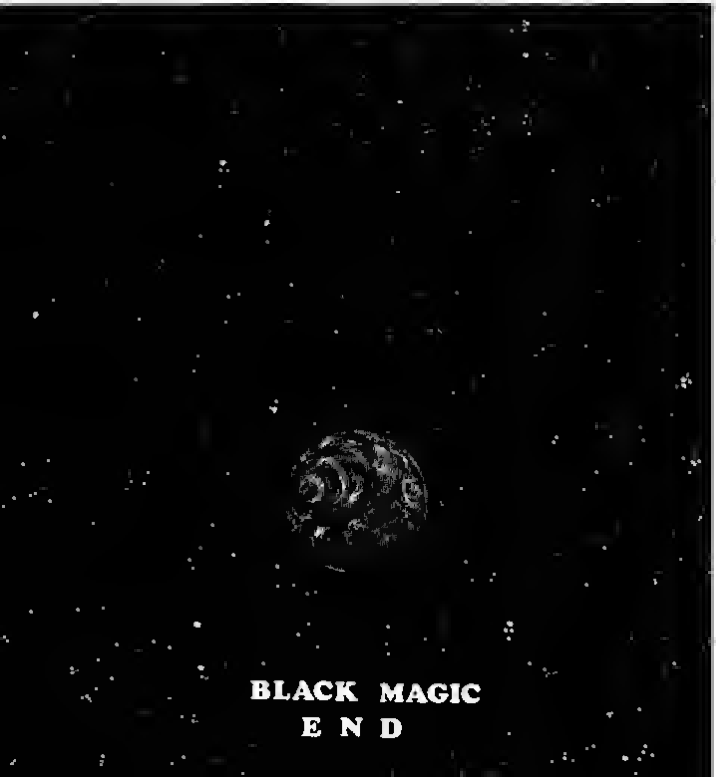
I GUESS THIS MATERIAL CIVILIZATION IS COMIN' TO AN END, huh...? OURS, ANYWAY.
. . OR MAYBE IT'S ALREADY ENDED hm?
sheri
NO MORE GUARDIANS, AN' NOTHING MORE TO GUARD... HA HA..
FUNNY, ISN'T IT...
:Sniff:
YEAH, GUESS SO.
THERE PROBABLY HASN'T BEEN A BIGGER PHASE CHANGE IN ALL OF HISTORY.
Huh?
WHAT?
.....
?!
HERE'S TO HUMANITY...
RIGHT!
TO MY DAUGHTER..

BEFORE ANYONE AWOKE THE NEXT MORNING, DUNA TYPHON LEFT VENUS BEHIND.

GOVERNMENT BY HUMANS BEGAN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THAT SAME YEAR, WITH NEMESIS AS AN ADVISOR.

BUT JUST EIGHT MONTHS LATER, THE BIOROID LIBERATION WAR BROKE OUT, AND VENUS PLUNGED ONCE AGAIN INTO A PERIOD OF GLOBAL CONFLICT.


THE WAR KILLED OFF MOST OF THE PLANT LIFE ON VENUS. WITH ITS MEANS OF CARBON DIOXIDE ASSIMILATION DEPLETED, THE ATMOSPHERE FILLED WITH CARBON DIOXIDE GAS, AND VENUS TURNED INTO A SCORCHING HELL. WITHIN TWO YEARS, IT WAS AN UNINHABITED AND UNINHABITABLE DESERT PLANET.


BLACK MAGIC
E N D

APPENDIX by Masamune Shirow

continued from Black Magic 3

NOW THEN...

The 66, considered more useful as a scout than as a combatant, can pass through booby-trapped areas, accurately and efficiently obtain information, fight if necessary, and return to base.

If capture appears imminent, the 66—cognizant of the potential loss to the enemy of important intelligence—will unhesitatingly self-destruct to maximum effect... Such booby-trapping belongs to mind the Vietnam War, which established the reputation of booby traps as cheap, vicious weapons requiring no support. Booby traps have been employed in all shapes and sizes for wars, crimes, and acts of terrorism. There is no standard model.

Throughout history, regardless of place or time, the first battle has always been a cruel, grisly experience for untested recruits. If green troops served among the Ottoman soldiers who stormed the Transylvania castle of Vlad Vaslav, or among the young warriors who entered the castle of Elizabeth I, they may as well have gone mad. M-66 attacks, on the other hand, are not delayed by fear: they do not waver in the face of the enemy.

The 66 can endure bamboo stakes and metal spikes, and in fact, by advancing through such obstacles, can clear the way for the rear guard. One advantage to the M-66's humanoid form is that it has the same bulk, and moves in the same manner, as a human. If it were designed with four or eight legs, it could not follow routes that require human footing.

But might it not explode in an accident? If it's shot, what happens to its fuel? And what about malfunctions ...? One imagines warehouses, once full of mass-produced robots, now emptied; cities crawling with the same pale feminine faces—and every one a ticking time bomb (no, no, this isn't a put-down of women!). But, of course, its power plant determines how easily an M 66 can blow up.

The model presented here is female for two reasons: to provide a lower center of gravity, and to make this *manga* more attractive. Besides, among humans, women have superior survival skills... not that this has anything to do with the 66. The female form also induces tension in enemy troops, making them slower to action (use of a rougher-looking character like the Hecatonchires would run the risk of intimidating even friendly troops). A male enemy meeting the 66 in the bush might be just a little less trigger-happy. And a real lecher could put his own life at risk. The rubber covering of the face and skin enhances this effect, while preventing bits of shrapnel or dust from penetrating the joints. Clothing serves the same purpose.

The skeleton comprises carbon fiber around a metal core. Adding strips of reinforced kevlar may improve the skeleton's resistance to attack. A standard 66 weighs between 100 and 200 kilograms, I'd guess. This could pose difficulties in swamps and quagmires, so any 66 deployed in such terrain should be equipped with rocket-propelled hook and winch—reducing its weight is not advisable as this would reduce its advantage in hand-to-hand combat. Even with new materials available to keep weight down, other factors must be considered: reactor heat, strength, center of gravity, weight distribution, the relationship of basal joint strength to peripheral weight during high speed movement, and so on... As for dynamics—that's another complex issue we won't even try to address here.

Bullet-proof armor is yet another concern linked inseparably to weight. Armor should be impervious to the 10mm bullets common to infantry. The upper limit is probably +P+.45ACP, but even that would allow rifle bullets to inflict considerable damage. Maybe the best approach would be to dispense with bullet proofing systems altogether, and instead minimize weight for improved maneuverability. That would make it easier to transport, too...

And then there's the problem of differential heating. Even with a built-in anti-condensation heater, dew may still form on lenses, filters, photoelectric parts and the like. Thus, producing all-weather models of precision machines is no easy task. No doubt, such machines are susceptible to magnetism, not to mention vibration, shock, electromagnetic pulse, torsion-induced load, etc., etc... An interesting characteristic the 66 shares with humans is that it stops moving when its intake and exhaust ports (i.e., nose and mouth) are closed.

An expressionless killer (it might even be smiling) with super-human fighting power—sounds like the stuff of horror stories! Many precedents come to mind: the artificial man in Mary Woolstonecraft Shelley's Frankeostein, or—pointing up the difference between magic and science—the more modern horror of the zombie, a walking corpse.

But a killer robot is just an extension of modern weaponry. Even if it moves on its own outside deliberate tests, it's not the work of the Devil, but simply a type of industrial accident. This is a technological (i.e., Western) sort of horror, arising precisely because living people are dragged off to their graves by a supposedly inanimate object—like a doll or a corpse—with no power or life of its own. If I had studied this type of horror story more thoroughly, I might have come up with a more interesting 66. It's something I'd like to pursue when my drawing ability has improved.

Treating the 66 as a type of weapon opens up possibilities for its use as a prop in an infinite number of scenarios; ultimately, however, the drama is a human one. In a medieval setting, the 66 could be knights pledged in fealty to a king (actually, it would more closely resemble a slave soldier, but we'll call it a knight since it's so high-priced).

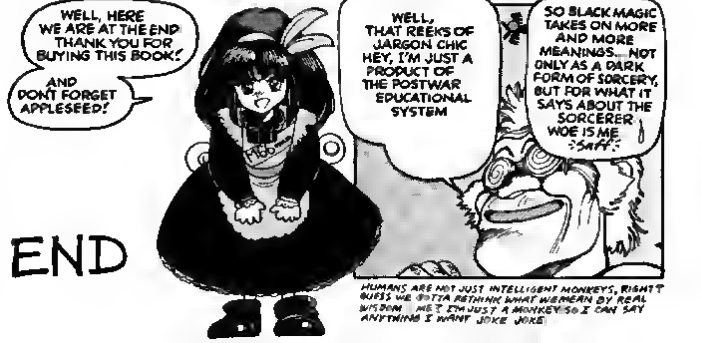
KSHAAA
KSHAAA
KSHAAA

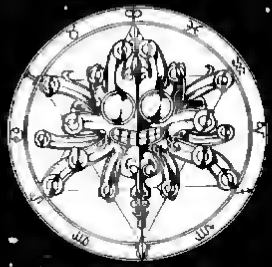
This hardly bears repeating, but the artificial intelligence represented by bioroids or androids draws from the mechanical side of humanity. Nonetheless, it effuses the smell of death, which may be why some say technology is evil incarnate. If artificial intelligence is brought as close to human intelligence as possible, then perhaps the remaining difference is the fundamental essence of humanity. Thus, numerous aspects of humanity are revealed: life and death, mind and machine, the determinate and the indeterminate, etc., etc...

Sorcery and religious ritual manipulate as their technology mechanical systems within the human mind. What is left after that? How far can humans climb toward a higher order? Death in life, life in death—is that really all there is? Are we sealed up like the Eternal Golden Braid? Sleepless nights are not brought on by horror stories alone. The 66 is a "Beautiful Captive"* or the last Gauguin: "Where did we come from? Who are we? Where are we going... ?"**

To broaden the vision of the System, to become one with the Universe... these are just dreams upon dreams, not to be comprehended by a simpleton of the TV generation like myself. I'm just a monkey, my Inner Universe is made of bones. That's why I like truly barbaric, bloody, messy, noisy unmuit. I want to evolve quickly into a real human being. But to be urged on by the likes of Nemesis, and evolve into some Substance X? That would lack class.

* Title of a painting by Rene Magritte
** Title of a painting by Paul Ganguin


WELL, HERE WE ARE AT THE END. THANK YOU FOR BUYING THIS BOOK!
AND DON'T FORGET APPLESEED!
END
WELL, THAT REEKS OF JARGON CHIC. HEY, I'M JUST A PRODUCT OF THE POSTWAR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
SO BLACK MAGIC TAKES ON MORE AND MORE MEANINGS... NOT ONLY AS A DARK FORM OF SORCERY, BUT FOR WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE SORCERER. WOE IS ME. SIGH.
HUMANS ARE NOT JUST INTELLIGENT MONKEYS, RIGHT? GUESS WE GOTTA RETHINK WHAT WE MEAN BY REAL WISDOM. HEY, I'M JUST A MONKEY, SO I CAN SAY ANYTHING I WANT. JOKE. JOKE.



Black Magic reaches its conclusion with the final confrontation between renegade Executor bioroid Typhon and the agents of Zeus, Executor ruler of the Venutian Federation. Zeus' Outer Space Colonization Project proceeds at a frenzied pace—almost as though it considered the Venutian humans' only sure chance for survival. And yet an important component of the project, an interstellar emigrant ship returning from Saturn to Venus, has been sabotaged by Hermes, commissioner under Zeus' command. The agent's plan succeeds despite Typhon's intercession, and the ship survives only by dint of the captain's calm action. Typhon and crew arrive home and reveal Zeus' treachery—ensuring his downfall and a new human dominated government. As the story ends, Typhon raises a toast to a new era... but history has not reached its end, for the role of the bioroids yet needs resolution...

• $3.50 CANADA